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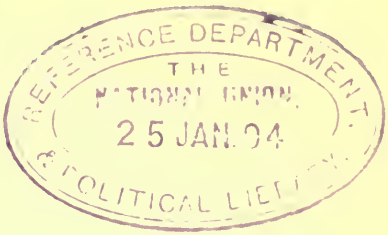

BY

T. M. HEALY, M.P.

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"The system which cannot bear discussion is doomed."—*Lord Beaconsfield.*

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In November, 1880, the representatives of the traversers in "The Queen *versus* Parnell and Others" asked for a short history of the Irish question as portion of the brief for the defence. As compiled by me it was afterwards published in pamphlet form, and passed through two editions in this country. It was also twice republished in America, and was translated into French under the title *Le Cri de l'Irlande.* Since 1881 the pamphlet has been out of print, and being written with special reference to the agrarian difficulty, then keenly discussed, a mere reprint now would lack actuality. As, however, the original edition is still frequently sought for, its material, wherever possible, has been availed of in the following pages. In the novel phase of the Irish question created by Mr. Gladstone's great measure for the better government of Ireland, it is hoped that the present publication may be of some little service in the battle for Home Rule.

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T. M. HEALY.

29th June, 1886.

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A WORD FOR IRELAND.

CHAPTER I.

ELIZABETH TO CROMWELL.

THE earliest records of all countries relate to disputes concerning land; of a less important character, between individual members of the same community; on a larger and grander scale, when opposing nations came into conflict. All the great invasions of history, from those which closed the wanderings of the Jewish tribes towards the Promised Land, to the latest British annexation—the incursions of the Vandals, Goths, and Huns, the invasions of the Saracens, the Moors, and, nearer home, those of the Saxons, the Danes, and the Normans—had as a motive not merely a lust for conquest or the desire for extended sovereignty; their direct and principal object was to gain possession of *the land* of the conquered country. In Ireland, the original Norman invaders, their earth-hunger once satisfied by the plunder of large estates, did not seek to perpetuate the distinction between conquered and conqueror by isolating themselves from the native race. On the contrary, they speedily fused with the conquered inhabitants, adopted their customs, their language, and their dress, and after a time the English Parliament, in a vain attempt to check this process of assimilation, began the long and dreary series of Irish Coercion Acts, by a penal statute

directed at the descendants of the original invaders, now become "more Irish than the Irish themselves."

It was not until the reign of Elizabeth that any general attempt was made, as a matter of state policy, by the English executive, to establish in Ireland English laws, English customs, and English tenures, in place of those existing from time immemorial throughout the island. Before the introduction of the English feudal system, the lands of Ireland belonged to the clans of Ireland. The chief of the clan, subject to certain privileges appurtenant to his chieftaincy, held only as trustee, and if by his misfeasance he became personally dispossessed, the rights of his people were in nowise affected. When, however, the councillors of Elizabeth determined to subjugate the entire island, and to substitute British for Brehon law throughout its whole extent, prince and people alike suffered when defeated. Victory for the invaders resulted in the dispossession and spoliation of the clansmen as well as of the chiefs who led them to battle; English adventurers, by the Queen's patent, obtained lordship and dominion over the conquered territory; and clan-ownership gave place to private property in land. Enormous rents were then exacted from the tillers of the soil by their new masters, and the consequent risings and disturbances thereupon were suppressed with a high hand. Landlordism in Ireland, planted in blood, has filled the country with suffering and misery for the last three centuries; and in the following pages a view is presented of its workings from the days of Elizabeth to Victoria, by means principally of extracts from the writings and speeches of English historians and statesmen.

At the death of Henry VIII. only three or four Irish

counties owned British sway, although on this slender sovereignty Henry was bold enough to assume the title of King of Ireland, thitherto unclaimed by English monarchs; but the savage raids of his daughter's soldiers, in the course of her long reign, converted the entire island into English "shire-ground." Saffron-shirted, spear-armed kern, in faction-torn clans, were no match for the mail-clad veterans of a united army, equipped with all the requisites of war, and directed by a central power. Still they fought hard for land and life; and in the later years of Elizabeth, as the war-worn clansmen became trained to resistance, the formidable Hugh O'Neill defeated her ablest generals in pitched battles. Sir Walter Raleigh (*Miscellaneous Works*, vol. viii. pp. 304-5) thus describes the change which no longer enabled her Majesty's forces to confront their enemies in unequal fight:—"I myself remember that, within these thirty years, . . . when I was a captain in Ireland, 100 foot and 100 horse would have beaten all the forces of the strongest province. But of late I have known an Easterling fight hand to hand with one of her majesty's ships; and the Irish in this last war have been victorious with an equal, or even an inferior force. And what is the reason? The Netherlands in those days had wooden guns and the Irish had darts; but the one is now furnished with as great a number of English ordnance as ourselves, and the other with as good pikes and muskets as England hath."

Before the date of this significant letter of Raleigh's, however, the whole country, outside Ulster, had been "pacified;" and while Shakespeare, Jonson, and Spencer were singing their sweetest at the court of the Virgin Queen, Ireland was being given over by her cultured soldiers to "carcasses and ashes." Mr. Froude gives a

sample of the art of war of that period, by quoting the report made in the year 1576 by Malby, the President of Connaught :—"At Christmas I marched into their territory [Shan Burke's], and finding courteous dealing with them had like to have cut my throat, I thought good to take another course, and so, with determination *to consume them with fire and sword, sparing neither old nor young*, I entered their mountains. I burnt all their corn and houses, and committed to the sword all that could be found, where were slain at that time above sixty of their best men, and among them the best leaders they had. This was Shan Burke's country. Then I burnt Ulick Burke's country. In like manner I assaulted a castle where the garrison surrendered. I put them to the misericordia of my soldiers. They were all slain. Thence I went on, sparing none which came in my way, which cruelty did so amaze their followers, that they could not tell where to bestow themselves. Shan Burke made means to me to pardon him, and forbear killing of his people. I would not hearken, but went on my way. The gentlemen of Clanrickard came to me. I found it was but dallying to win time, so I left Ulick as little corn and as few houses standing as I left his brother, and what people was found had as little favour as the other had. *It was all done in rain, and frost, and storm*, journeys in such weather bringing them the sooner to submission. They are humble enough now, and will yield to any terms we like to offer them."

Hollinshed thus describes the progress of the English army :—"As they went, they drove the whole country before them into the Ventrie, and by that means they preyed and took all the cattle in the country, to the number of 8,000 kine, besides horses, garrons, sheep, and goats; and all such people as they met they did

without mercy put to the sword; by these means, the whole country having no cattle nor kine left, they were driven to such extremities that for want of victuals they were either to die and perish for famine or die under the sword. . . . By reason of the continuall persecuting of the rebells, who could have no breath nor rest to releeve themselves, but were alwaies by one garrison or other hurt or pursued; and by reason the harvest was taken from them, their cattells in great numbers preied from them, and the whole countrie spoiled and preied: the poore people, who lived onlie upon their labors, and fed by their milch cowes, were so distressed, that they would follow after the goods which were taken from them, and offer themselves, their wives and children, rather to be slaine by the armie, than to suffer the famine wherewith they were now pinched."—*Hollinshed*, vi. 33 and 427; also *Leland*, book iv. chap. ii.

Again, take the following from Sir George Carew:—"The President having received certaine information, that the Mounster fugitives were harboured in those parts, having before burned all the houses and corne, and taken great preyes in Owny Onubrian and Kilquig, a strong and fast countrey, not farre from Limerick, diverted his forces into East Clanwilliam and Muskery-quirke, where Pierce Lacy had lately been succoured; and harassing the country, killed all mankind that were found therein, for a terrour to those as should give releefe to the runagate traitors. Thence wee came to Arleaghe woods, where wee did the like, not leaving behind us man or beast, corne or cattle, except such as had been conveyed into castles. . . . They wasted and forraged the country, so as in a small time it was not able to give the rebells any reliefe; having

spoiled and brought into their garrisons the most part of their corne, being newly reaped."—*Pacata Hibernia*, pp. 189, 584.

The English Protestant historian, Moryson, says :—"No spectacle was more frequent in the ditches of the towns, and especially in wasted countries, than to see multitudes of these poor people, the Irish, dead, with their mouths all coloured green by eating nettles, docks, and all things they could rend above ground."

By the extirpation of the Munster Geraldines, 570,000 acres belonging to the Earl of Desmond were vested in the Queen :—"Proclamation was accordingly made throughout England, inviting 'younger brothers of good families' to undertake the plantation of Desmond—each planter to obtain a certain scope of land, on condition of settling thereupon so many families—'none of the native Irish to be admitted.' Under these conditions, Sir Christopher Hatton took up 10,000 acres in Waterford; Sir Walter Raleigh, 12,000* acres, partly in Waterford and partly in Cork; Sir William Harbart, or Herbert, 13,000 acres in Kerry; Sir Edward Denny, 6,000 in the same county; Sir Warren St. Leger, and Sir Thomas Norris, 6,000 acres each in Cork; Sir William Courtney, 10,000 acres in Limerick; Sir Edward Fitton, 11,500 acres in Tipperary and Waterford; and Edmund Spenser, 3,000 acres in Cork, on the beautiful Blackwater. The other notable undertakers were the Hides, Butchers, Wirths, Berkleys, Trenchards, Thorntons, Billingsleys, etc. Some of these grants, especially Raleigh's, fell in the next reign to Richard Boyle, the so-called '*Great* Earl of Cork'—

* Sir Walter really had 42,000 acres granted to him, *i.e.*, three seignories and a half, each containing 12,000 acres. See *Calendar of Patent Rolls in Ireland, temp. Eliz.* p. 323, and *Carte's Ormond*, vol. i. p. 67.

probably the most pious hypocrite to be found in the long roll of the 'Munster Undertakers.'"—Godkin's *Land War.**

The agrarian legislation of the Victorian era, with its Land Acts and Arrears Act, took, it appears, three centuries to ripen; for in the volume (107-5) of the State Papers for 1577 (as quoted by Sir J. Pope Hennessy in his *Raleigh in Ireland*), there is a report from the Irish Chancellor to Walsingham, denouncing the "cruelty of the landlords" reducing the "tenants to be starved beggars;" and a despatch from the Lord Deputy to Elizabeth recommending "Commissioners to settle the rent" landlords should take of their tenants, and also "a Commission to compound for arrears."

"The eagles took wing for the Spanish main; the vultures descended upon Ireland," says Mr. Goldwin Smith (*Oxford Lectures*). At this time England was ringing with the cruelties committed in the Netherlands by the Duke of Alva; but contrasting them with those of the English in Ireland, Elizabeth's Prime Minister, Lord Burghley, felt obliged to declare "the Flemings had not such cause to rebel against the oppression of the Spaniards, as the Irish against the tyranny of England." (Letter to Sir Henry Wallop, War Treasurer for Ireland, 10th June, 1582, quoted in Froude's *History of England*, vol. x. p. 604.)

After the close of the reign of Elizabeth and the Flight of the Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell (O'Neill and O'Donnell), the work of extirpation and plantation was vigorously carried on by James I.; and in the early

* Mr. Godkin, from whose valuable work quotations are freely taken, was ordained an Independent Minister. He was afterwards editor of the Conservative Dublin *Daily Express*, and was for many years the Irish Correspondent of *The Times*.

part of his reign, Sir John Davies, one of the Irish Attorney-Generals of that monarch, was able to report that—"Before Michaelmas he would be ready to present to his majesty a perfect survey of six whole counties which he now hath in actual possession in the province of Ulster, of greater extent of land than any Prince in Europe hath in his own hands to dispose of."

A sort of commission was appointed for parcelling out the land. It sat at Limavady, and as a sample of its proceedings, it may be mentioned that a sub-chief, O'Cahan, who held under O'Neill, had his lands confiscated simply because of the flight of that Earl. "Although sundry royal and vice-regal proclamations had assured the tenants that they would not be disturbed in their possessions, on account of the offences of their chiefs, it was proclaimed that neither O'Cahan, nor those who lived under him, had any estate whatever in the lands."—Godkin's *Land War*.

A quotation from a letter written by the Lord-Deputy, about the year 1607 (given in Mr. Godkin's work), will show the spirit in which the inhabitants of Ireland were regarded by their English rulers:—"I have often said and written, it is famine that must consume the Irish, as our swords and other endeavours worked not that speedy effect which is expected; *hunger* would be a better, because a speedier, weapon to employ against them than the sword. . . . I burned all along the Lough [Neagh] within four miles of Dungannon, and killed 100 people, sparing none, of what quality, age, or sex soever, besides many burned to death. We killed man, woman, and child, horse, beast, and whatsoever we could find." The province of Ulster having by this time been pretty well cleared of its native inhabitants, "On July 21, 1609,

a commission was issued by the Crown to make inquisition concerning the forfeited lands in Ulster, after the flight of the Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell. The commissioners included the Lord-Deputy Chichester, the Archbishops of Armagh and Dublin, Sir John Davies, Attorney-General; Sir William Parsons, Surveyor-General, and several other public functionaries. This work done, King James, acting on the advice of his Prime Minister, the Earl of Salisbury, took measures for the plantation. . . . The city of London was thought to be the best quarter to look to for funds to carry on the plantation. Accordingly, Lord Salisbury had a conference with the lord-mayor, Humphrey Weld, Sir John Jolles, and Sir W. Cockaine, who were well acquainted with Irish affairs. The result was the publication of 'Motives and Reasons to induce the City of London to undertake the Plantation in the North of Ireland.' The corporation were willing to undertake the work of plantation if the account given of its advantages should prove to be correct. . . . So they sent over 'four wise, grave, and discreet citizens, to view the situation proposed for the new colony.' . . . On their return they presented a report to the Court of Common Council, which was openly read. The report was favourable. . . . With respect to the disposal of such of the natives as remained, it was arranged that some were to be planted on two of the small allotments, and upon the glebes; others upon the land of Sir Art O'Neill's sons and Sir Henry Oge O'Neill's sons, 'and of such other Irish as shall be thought fit to have any freeholds; some others upon the portions of such servitors as are not able to inhabit these lands with English or Scotch tenants, especially of such as best know how to rule and order the Irish.

But the swordsmen (that is, the armed retainers or soldiers of the chiefs) are to be transplanted into such other parts of the kingdom as, by reasons of the wastes therein, are fittest to receive them—namely, into Connaught and some parts of Munster, where they are to be dispersed, and not planted together in one place; and such swordsmen who have not followers or cattle of their own, to be disposed of in his majesty's service."

The character of the plantation made under Elizabeth differed materially from that of James's reign. Gigantic grants were made in Munster by Elizabeth to her favourites, whereas we find that the allotments made by James to each individual were of comparatively moderate extent. Thus we have the Prime Minister, writing to Chichester about the year 1607, complaining:—"That was an oversight in the plantation of Munster, where 12,000 acres were commonly allotted to bankrupts and country gentlemen, that never knew the disposition of the Irish; so as God forbid that those who have spent their blood in the service should not of all others be preferred."

All through the reign of James the work of conquest and confiscation went steadily on. Rebellion was promoted, and then, when the chiefs were routed, we find the record running somewhat in this fashion:—"O'Dogherty's country being confiscated, the Lord-Deputy, Chichester, was rewarded with the greatest portion of his lands. But what was to be done with the people? In the first instance they were driven from the rich lowlands along the borders of Lough Foyle and Lough Swilly, and compelled to take refuge in the mountain fastnesses which stretched to a vast extent from Moville westward along the Atlantic Coast. But could those 'idle kerne and swordsmen,' thus punished

with loss of lands and home for the crimes of their chief, be safely trusted to remain anywhere in the neighbourhood of the new English settlers? Sir John Davis and Sir Toby Caulfield thought of a plan by which they could get rid of the danger. Gustavus Adolphus was then fighting the battles of Protestantism against the house of Austria. . . . To what better use, then, could the 'loose Irish kerne and swordsmen' of Donegal be turned than to send them to fight in the army of the King of Sweden? Accordingly 6,000 of the able-bodied peasantry of Inishowen were shipped off for this service."

A fighting adventurer named St. Lawrence, himself a Catholic, and the ancestor of the present Earl of Howth, obtained large grants of confiscated lands as a consideration for his giving perjured testimony as to the existence of a conspiracy on the part of O'Neill. Sir Fulke Conway, a Welsh officer, obtained similar grants, and at his death in 1626, his brother, who was a favourite of Charles I., succeeded to the estate, to which his royal patron added the lands of Derryvolgie, thus making him lord of nearly 70,000 statute acres of the broad lands of Down and Antrim.

When Crown grants of land were made to the planters or adventurers, it was expressly stipulated that their tenants were to be English or Scotch, and Protestants. A Presbyterian minister, whose father was one of the planters, thus describes the men who came over to regenerate Ireland:—"From Scotland came many, and from England not a few; yet all of them generally the scum of both nations, who from debt, or mocking and fleeing from justice, or seeking shelter, came hither, hoping to be without fear of man's justice, in a land where there was nothing, or but little as yet,

of the fear of God. . . . Most of the people were all void of godliness. . . . On all hands atheism increased, and disregard of God: iniquity abounds with contention, fighting, murder, and adultery."—MS. History by Rev. A. Stuart, quoted in Reid's *History of the Presbyterian Church*, vol. i. p. 96.

As for the miserable remnant of the native population, Father Meehan, in his *Confederation of Kilkenny*, p. 53, says:—"The tyranny of such men as Sir Frederick Hamilton of Manorhamilton, and Sir Charles Coote, drove the unfortunate peasantry to madness. The cruelties inflicted on the Christians of Spain by Aben Humeya and his Morisco captains pale before the atrocities perpetrated by Hamilton on the inhabitants of Leitrim and Longford. His bawn or castle was the rendezvous of a ferocious banditti, who spread death and desolation around them. By day and night he sent from within its walls a savage soldiery, who robbed and murdered with impunity. When they returned to their leader, the most acceptable gifts they could offer were the heads of the wretched people, which they brutally severed from the bodies; women and tender girls were not exempt from the horrors which this fanatic inflicted in the holy name of God. Upon a hill near his castle, he erected a gallows, from which every day a fresh victim was suspended." In the same work, p. 18, Sir Charles Coote is thus spoken of:—"Coote's thirst for blood was insatiable. He threatened not to leave a Catholic in Ireland." In Wicklow he put many innocent persons to the sword without distinction of age or sex. On one occasion when he met a soldier carrying an infant on the point of his pike, he was charged with saying that "he liked such frolics." Lord Castlehaven gives a

fearful account of the conduct of the troops under Coote's command, "who killed men, women, and children promiscuously." Leland speaks of "his ruthless and indiscriminate carnage." Warner says "he was a stranger to mercy."—Miss Cusack's *History of Ireland*, p. 482.

By the end of the reign of James I., Ulster began to be pretty thickly populated by Scotch colonists, and the foundations of important towns, like Derry, Lurgan, and Belfast, with special privileges, had been laid. A remnant of native Irish, groaning under the exactions of the invaders, of course only waited an opportunity to throw off the foreign yoke; and the exactions of the "undertakers" at last produced the Rising of 1641. On the outbreak of this rebellion, before it had extended beyond the borders of Ulster, the English Parliament passed the Act 17th Charles I., whereby 2,500,000 acres of land were declared forfeited in Ireland, and which enacted that these acres should be offered for sale at fixed rates in London and the surrounding districts. One of the notable clauses in the Act provides that the lands are to be taken from the four provinces in equal proportions, that is, one-fourth from each, though at the time when it received the royal assent there was no rebel outside Ulster, and, there, not one convicted. Again, there cannot be a doubt but that Parsons and Borlase, who were Lords-Justices at the opening of the rebellion, goaded the Catholics of the Pale into insurrection, and refused all terms of accommodation, in view of the splendid forfeitures which awaited suppression by the sword.

Throughout the reign of Charles I. the Irish proprietors were harassed by Strafford, who imagined the device of a Defective Titles' Commission, and plotted the

escheatal of the entire province of Connaught to the Crown by legal chicane. The Irish House of Commons was induced to vote large supplies to Charles, on a promise that these schemes should not be persisted in, but the promise was shamefully broken, and Strafford had juries which would not "find" estates for the King, amerced in thousands of pounds, tortured and imprisoned.—O'Connell's *Memoir of Ireland*, chap. iii.

When the Commonwealth was proclaimed in England, the Irish, fondly imagining that by espousing the cause of Charles I. against the Parliament they were striking for their property and religion, as well as for the King, a rally was everywhere made to the Royalist side over all the island, and for some years the loyalist, or popular cause, was in the ascendant. But Cromwell, fresh from his victories in England, appears on the scene, and once more the work of savage subjugation and wholesale confiscation commences. The massacres at Drogheda and Wexford, for which in his despatches to Parliament he gave God thanks, set an example to lieutenants not more merciful than himself. Mr. Godkin says:—"Sir William Cole, ancestor of the Earl of Enniskillen, proudly boasted of his achievement in having 7,000 of the rebels famished to death within a circuit of a few miles of his garrison: the descendants of the remnant of the natives on his estate do not forget how the family obtained its wealth and honours. Lord Cork prepared 1,100 indictments against men of property in his province, which he sent to the Speaker of the Long Parliament, with an urgent request that they might be returned to him, with authority to proceed against the parties named as outlaws. In Leinster, 4,000 similar indictments were found in the course of two days by the free use of the rack with witnesses.

Sir John Reid, an officer of the King's bed-chamber, and Mr. Barnwall of Kilbrue, a gentleman of three score and six, were among those who underwent the torture." Similar proceedings, which it is needless to describe, went on over the entire country. "The Long Parliament having confiscated 2,500,000 acres, offered it as security to 'adventurers' who would advance money to meet the cost of the war. In February, 1642, the House of Commons received a petition 'of divers well affected' to it, offering to raise and maintain forces at their own charge 'against the rebels of Ireland, and afterwards to receive their recompense out of the rebels' estates.' Under the Act 'for the speedy reducing of the rebels,' the adventurers were to carry over a brigade of 5,000 foot and 500 horse, and to have the right of appointing their own officers. And they were to have estates given to them at the following rates: 1,000 acres for £200 in Ulster, for £300 in Connaught, for £450 in Munster, and £600 in Leinster. The rates per acre were 4s., 6s., 8s., and 12s. in those provinces respectively.

"At the end of 1653, the Parliament made a division of the spoil among the conquerors and the adventurers; and on September 26th, an Act was passed for the new planting of Ireland by English. The Government reserved for itself the towns, the church lands, and the tithes, the Established Church, hierarchy and all, having been utterly abolished. The four counties of Dublin, Kildare, Carlow, and Cork were also reserved. The amount due to the adventurers was £360,000. This they divided into three lots, of which £110,000 was to be satisfied in Munster, £205,000 in Leinster, and £45,000 in Ulster, and the moiety of ten counties were charged with their payment—Waterford, Limerick,

and Tipperary in Munster; Meath, Westmeath, King's and Queen's Counties, in Leinster; and Antrim, Down, and Armagh, in Ulster. But as all was required by the Adventurers' Act to be done by lot, a lottery was appointed, to be held in Grocers' Hall, London, for July 20th, 1653, to begin at 8 o'clock in the morning, when lots should be first drawn in which province each adventurer was to be satisfied, not exceeding the specified amounts in any province; lots were to be drawn, secondly, to ascertain in which of the ten counties each adventurer was to receive his land—the lots not to exceed, in Westmeath £70,000, in Tipperary £60,000, in Meath £55,000, in King's and Queen's Counties £40,000 each, in Limerick, £30,000, in Waterford £20,000, in Antrim, Down, and Armagh, £15,000 each." Later on, "The English Parliament resolved to clear out the population of all the principal cities and seaport towns, though nearly all founded and inhabited by Danes or English, and men of English descent. In order to raise funds for the war, the following towns were offered to English merchants for sale at the prices annexed:—Limerick, with 12,000 acres contiguous, for £30,000, and a rent of £625, payable to the state; Waterford, with 1,500 acres contiguous at the same rate; Galway, with 10,000 acres, for £7,500, and a rent of £520; Wexford, with 6,000 acres, for £5,000, and a rent of £156 4s.

"On July 23, 1655, the inhabitants of Galway were commanded to quit the town for ever by the 1st November following, the owners of houses getting compensation at eight years' purchase.

"On October 30, this order was executed. All the inhabitants, except the sick and bed-rid, were at once banished, to provide accommodation for English Pro-

testants, whose integrity to the state should entitle them to be trusted in a place of such importance; and Sir Charles Coote, on November 7, received the thanks of the Government for clearing the town, with a request that he would remove the sick and bed-rid as soon as the season might permit, and take care that the houses while empty were not spoiled by the soldiery. The town was thus made ready for the English."—Godkin's *Land War*.

All the Irish population, including many of the Anglo-Irish planted by Elizabeth, were driven across the Shannon into Connaught. "Hell or Connaught" was their alternative, and so sweeping were the clearances effected, that in Tipperary and other places, according to Prendergast's *Cromwellian Settlement*, the soldiery who came to settle upon the lands allotted to them, when they could not agree as to the boundaries of their estates, were compelled to obtain a special permission from the authorities to bring back for a short time from Connaught some of the dispossessed owners to point out their lands. That this to-day might be shown to be something more than a mere "historic" grievance, is perhaps evident from the manner in which the people are found crowded on the wastes and mountains of the West.

With the exception of some minor incidents of a similar character, which followed the Irish victories of William, the Cromwellian settlement just described was the last considerable unsettlement in the ownership of landed property in Ireland. It was the successful consummation of work begun by Elizabeth—the wresting of the soil of Ireland from the Irish people.

Cromwell's administration effected a revolution unparalleled in history. Its proceedings have been well

summarized by Mr. D'Arcy McGee in his *History of Ireland*:—"The Long Parliament, still dragging out its days under the shadow of Cromwell's great name, declared in its session of 1652 the rebellion in Ireland 'subdued and ended,' and proceeded to legislate for that kingdom as a conquered country. On August 12 they passed their Act of Settlement, the authorship of which was attributed to Lord Orrery, in this respect the worthy son of the first Earl of Cork. Under this Act there were four chief descriptions of persons whose status was thus settled: 1. All ecclesiastics and royalist proprietors were exempted from pardon of life or estate. 2. All royalist commissioned officers were condemned to banishment, and the forfeit of two-thirds of their property, one-third being retained for the support of their wives and children. 3. Those who had not been in arms, but could be shown, by a parliamentary commission, to have manifested 'a constant good affection' to the war, were to forfeit one-third of their estates, and receive 'an equivalent' for the remaining two-thirds west of the Shannon. 4. All husbandmen and others of the inferior sort, 'not possessed of lands or goods exceeding the value of £10,' were to have a free pardon, on condition also of transporting themselves across the Shannon.

"This last condition of the Cromwellian settlement distinguished it, in our annals, from every other proscription of the native population formerly attempted. The great river of Ireland, rising in the mountains of Leitrim, nearly severs the five western counties from the rest of the kingdom. The province thus set apart, though one of the largest in superficial extent, had also the largest proportion of waste and water, mountain and moorland. The new inhabitants were there to con-

gregate from all the other provinces before the first day of May, 1654, under penalty of outlawry and all its consequences; and when there, they were not to appear within two miles of the Shannon, or four miles of the sea. A rigorous passport system, to evade which was death without form of trial, completed this settlement, the design of which was to shut up the remaining Catholic inhabitants from all intercourse with mankind, and all communion with the other inhabitants of their own country.

"A new survey of the whole kingdom was also ordered, under the direction of Sir William Petty, the fortunate economist who founded the house of Lansdowne. By him the surface of the kingdom was estimated at 10,500,000 plantation acres, 3,000,000 of which were deducted for water and waste. Of the remainder, above 5,000,000 were in Catholic hands in 1641; 300,000 were church and college lands; and 2,000,000 were in possession of the Protestant settlers of the reigns of James and Elizabeth. Under the Protectorate, 5,000,000 acres were confiscated. This enormous spoil, two-thirds of the whole island, went to the soldiers and adventurers who had served against the Irish, or had contributed to the military chest since 1641—except 700,000 acres given in 'exchange' to the banished in Clare and Connaught; and 1,200,000 confirmed to 'innocent Papists.'

"The government of Ireland was vested in the Deputy, the Commander-in-chief, and four commissioners—Ludlow, Corbett, Jones, and Weaver. There was, moreover, a high court of justice, which perambulated the kingdom, and exercised an absolute authority over life and property, greater than even Strafford's court of Star Chamber had pretended to.

Over this court presided Lord Lowther, assisted by Mr. Justice Donnellan, by Cooke, solicitor to the Parliament on the trial of King Charles, and the regicide Reynolds. By this court, Sir Phelim O'Neill, Viscount Mayo, and Colonels O'Toole and Bagnall were condemned and executed; children of both sexes were captured by thousands, and sold as slaves to the tobacco-planters of Virginia and the West Indies. Sir William Petty states that 6,000 boys and girls were sent to those islands. The number of all ages thus transported was estimated at 100,000 souls. As to the 'swordsmen' who had been trained to fighting, Petty, in his *Political Anatomy*, records that 'the chiefest and most eminentest of the nobility, and many of the gentry, had taken conditions from the King of Spain, and had transported 40,000 of the most active spirited men, most acquainted with the dangers and discipline of war.' The chief commissioners in Dublin had despatched assistant commissioners to the provinces. The distribution which they made of the soil was nearly as complete as that of Canaan among the Israelites; and this was the model which the Puritans had always before their minds. Where a miserable residue of the population was required to till the land for its new owners, they were tolerated, as the Gibeonites had been by Joshua. Irish gentlemen who had obtained pardons were obliged to wear a distinctive mark on their dress on pain of death. Persons of inferior rank were distinguished by a black spot on the right cheek. Wanting this, their punishment was the branding-iron or the gallows.

"No vestige of the Catholic religion was allowed to exist. Catholic lawyers and schoolmasters were silenced. All ecclesiastics were slain like the priests of Baal.

Three bishops and 300 of the inferior clergy thus perished. The bedridden Bishop of Kilmore was the only native clergyman permitted to survive. If, in mountain recesses or caves, a few peasants were detected at mass, they were smoked out and shot."

Writing of this period, Daniel O'Connell, in his valuable *Memoir on Ireland*, chap. iii., exclaims:—"The natural result of the promiscuous slaughter of the unarmed peasantry wherever the English soldiers could lay hold on them, was, as a matter of course, an appalling famine. The ploughman was killed in the half-ploughed field. The labourer met his death at the spade. The haymaker was himself mowed down. A universal famine, and its necessary concomitant, pestilence, covered the land. An eye-witness (*Colonel Laurence's Interest of Ireland*, part ii., pp. 86, 87)—himself employed in hunting to death the Irish, has left the description which follows:—'About the year 1652 and 1653, the plague and famine had so swept away whole countries, that a man might travel twenty or thirty miles, and not see a living creature—either man, beast, or bird; they being either all dead, or had quit those desolate places; our soldiers would tell stories of the place where they saw a smoak; it was so rare to see either smoak by day, or fire or candle by night. And when we did meet with two or three poor cabins, none but very aged men, with women and children, and those, like the prophet, might have complained, 'We are become as a bottle in the smoak, our skin is black like an oven because of the terrible famine.'—I have seen those miserable creatures plucking stinking carrion out of a ditch, black and rotten, and been credibly informed that they digged corpses out of the grave to eat: but the most tragical story I ever heard was from

an officer commanding a party of horse, who, hunting for tories [*i.e.*, human beings] in a dark night, discovered a light, which they supposed to be a fire, which the tories usually made in those waste countries to dress their provisions and warm themselves; but drawing near, they found it a ruined cabin, and besetting it round, some did alight, and peeping at the window, where they saw a great fire of wood, and a company of miserable old women and children sitting round about it, and betwixt them and the fire, a dead corpse lay broiling, which, as the fire roasted, they cut off collops and eat.'"

Thus England got rid (*pro tem.*) of a race concerning which Mr. Prendergast (*Cromwellian Settlement*) found this contemporary testimony in an English MS. in Trinity College Library, Dublin, dated 1615:—"There lives not a people more hardy, active, and painful; . . . neither is there any will endure the miseries of warre, as famine, watching, heat, cold, wet, travel, and the like, so naturally and with such facility and courage that they do. The Prince of Orange's Excellency uses often publiquely to deliver that the Irish are souldiers the first day of their birth. The famous Henry IV., late King of France, said they would prove no nation so resolute martial men as they, would they be ruly and not too headstrong. And Sir John Norris was wont to ascribe this particular to that nation above others, that he never beheld so few of any country as of Irish that were idiots and cowards, which is very notable."

CHAPTER II.

CROMWELL TO THE UNION.

When upon the death of Cromwell the Restoration brought reparation and reward to the Royalists of Britain, no relief came to the race which had fought so stoutly for the king in the sister country. The Scotch sold their king, the English killed him, the Irish fought for him; but the Irish alone suffered alike by Revolution and Restoration. Many of the families exiled in Connaught hastened across the Shannon when the monarchy was restored, only to find that their lands were held by Cromwellian troopers, who had by that time become firmly established on them; and in but very few cases did the original owner succeed in recovering his estate.

After the restoration of Charles II., as before, the native Irish were repressed with a stern hand, and when, at his death, upon the accession of James II., they began to breathe freely once more, the Williamite Revolution quickly put an end to their hopes, and again Ireland became the battle-ground of rival English combatants. Untaught by the way in which their fidelity to Charles I. had been rewarded, the Irish once more took the loyalist side, and with similar results. Even after the flight of James from the Boyne, and his embarkation to France, they kept up the fight for the legitimate king, years after his English and Scotch supporters had ceased to succour him. From that time, unto the present generation, the loyalists of Ireland and their children have endured the vengeance of the successful rebels and

their descendants, who took sides against their legitimate king.

After the violation of the Treaty of Limerick, which guaranteed the Catholics in the enjoyment of their religious liberties and their lands, William's faith-breaking advisers appointed a commission to inquire into the forfeited estates; and 1,060,792 Irish acres (equal to 1,918,307 English acres) were declared escheated to the Crown. There are altogether in Ireland 20,819,928 acres, and every acre of these had (sometimes more than once) changed hands in the confiscations of the preceding century.—(Stephenson Gregg's *History of Ireland.*)

In 1695 William, in his speech read to the Irish Parliament, assured them, in the teeth of the pact of Limerick, that he was intent upon the firm settlement of Ireland upon a Protestant basis, and so well did he keep his word that when he died there did not remain in the hands of Catholics one-sixth of the lands which their grandfathers held, even after the passing of the Act of Settlement.

The Acts for securing the Protestant interest formed the series known as the Penal Code, which was in force for nearly the whole of the eighteenth century. Edmund Burke, in a letter to Sir H. Langrishe (*Works*, vol. vi. page 375), says of this dreadful code:—"It was a complete system, full of coherence and consistency; well digested and well composed in all its parts. It was a machine of wise and deliberate contrivance, and as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man."

These Penal Laws, which appeared to be directed solely to secure the extirpation of one form of worship and

the ascendancy of another, formed at the same time a tremendous political engine for securing their estates to the men of the plantations and the undertakings of the preceding reigns. It was not merely religious bigotry which was at the root of these ferocious enactments, there was also the consciousness that the men who made the laws rendering the possession of property value above £5 illegal for Catholics, and only legal for Protestants, were wrongfully and unjustly in possession of the lands and goods of those whose religion they were proscribing.

For example :—"When the last Duke of Ormond arrived as Lord-Lieutenant in 1703, the Commons waited on him with a Bill 'for discouraging the further growth of Popery,' which became law, having met his decided approval. This Act provided that if the son of a Catholic became a Protestant, the father should be incapable of selling or mortgaging his estate, or disposing of any portion of it by will. If a child ever so young professed to be a Protestant, it was to be taken from its parents, and placed under the guardianship of the nearest Protestant relation. The sixth clause renders Papists incapable of purchasing any manors, tenements, hereditaments, or any rents or profits arising out of the same, or of holding any lease of lives, or other lease whatever, for any term exceeding thirty-one years. And with respect even to such limited leases, it further enacts, that if a Papist should hold a farm producing a profit greater than one-third of the amount of the rent, his right to such should immediately cease, and pass over entirely to the first Protestant who should discover the rate of profit. The seventh clause prohibits Papists from succeeding to the properties or estates of their Protestant relations. By the tenth clause, the estate of

a Papist, not having a Protestant heir, is ordered to be gavelled, or divided in equal shares between *all* his children. The sixteenth and twenty-fourth clauses impose the oath of abjuration and the sacramental test as a qualification for office, and for voting at elections. The twenty-third clause deprives the Catholics of Limerick and Galway of the protection secured to them by the articles of the Treaty of Limerick. The twenty-fifth clause vests in the Crown all advowsons possessed by Papists. "A further Act was passed, in 1709, imposing additional penalties. The first clause declares that no Papist shall be capable of holding an annuity for life. The third provides that the child of a Papist, on conforming, shall at once receive an annuity from his father, and that the Chancellor shall compel the father to discover, upon oath, the full value of his estate, real and personal, and thereupon make an order for the support of such conforming child or children, and for securing such share of the property, after the father's death, as the court shall think fit. The fourteenth and fifteenth clauses secure jointures to Popish wives who shall conform. The sixteenth prohibits a Papist from teaching, even as assistant to a Protestant master. The eighteenth gives a salary of £30 per annum to Popish priests who shall conform. The twentieth provides rewards for the discovery of Popish prelates, priests and teachers."—Godkin's *Land War*. This was done in defiance of treaty, and Hallam, speaking of these statutes, says :—"To have exterminated the Catholics by the sword, or expelled them like the Moriscos of Spain, would have been little more repugnant to justice and humanity, but incomparably more politic." If for "Papist" property, *Irish* property is understood, and for "Protestant," *Englishman* (or person of English descent),

the purport of these Acts will be better understood. "Religion" of course gave zest to the plundering, but if the Irish too had been Protestants, their rulers would have robbed them all the same.

The English conquest, with its planters and undertakers, had thus artificially created a landlord class in Ireland. That class was of course purely Protestant, and backed by English power, its members were now engaged in making laws for the enemies they had spoiled. Land, and the greed for its possession, was at the bottom of it all. Writing of this dreary eighteenth century, Mr. Froude says:—"The English deliberately determined to keep Ireland poor and miserable, as the readiest means to prevent it being troublesome. They destroyed Irish trade and shipping by navigation laws. They extinguished Irish manufactures by differential duties. They laid disabilities even on its wretched agriculture, for fear that Irish importations might injure the English farmers." And speaking of the state of things which British domination thus established, he exclaims:—"Of all the fatal gifts which we bestowed on our unhappy possession [Ireland], the greatest was the English system of owning land. Land, properly speaking, cannot be owned by any man—it belongs to all the human race. Laws have to be made to secure the profits of their industry to those who cultivate it: but the private property of this or that person, which he is entitled to deal with as he pleases, land never ought to be and never strictly is. In Ireland, as in all primitive civilizations, the soil was divided among the tribes. Each tribe collectively owned its own district. Under the feudal system the proprietor was the Crown, as representing the nation; while the subordinate tenures

were held with duties attached to them, and were liable on non-fulfilment to forfeiture. In England the burden of defence was on the land. Every gentleman, according to his estate, was bound to bring so many men into the field properly armed and accoutred. When a standing army was substituted for the old levies, the country squires served as unpaid magistrates on the commission of the peace. The country squire system was, in fact, a development of the feudal system, and, as we gave the feudal system to Ireland, so we tried long and earnestly to give them our landowners. The intention, doubtless, was as good as possible in both cases, but we had taken no trouble to understand Ireland, and we failed as completely as before. The duties attached to landed property died away, or were forgotten—the ownership only remained. The people, retaining their tribal traditions, believed that they had rights upon the land on which they lived. The owner believed that there were no rights but his own. In England the rights of landlords have similarly survived their duties, but they have been modified by custom or public opinion. In Ireland, the proprietor was an alien, with the fortunes of the residents upon his estates in his hands and at his mercy. He was divided from them in creed and language; he despised them, as of an inferior race, and he acknowledged no interest in common with them. Had he been allowed to trample on them, and make them his slaves, he would have cared for them, perhaps, as he cared for his horses. But their persons were free, while their farms and houses were his; and thus his only object was to wring out of them the last penny which they could pay, leaving them and their children to a life scarcely raised above the level of their own pigs."—*Romanism and the Irish Race*, p. 36.

A striking parallel, founded on the state of things thus produced, is drawn by Mr. Godkin :—"Let us imagine that the Norman King had lived in Paris, and kept a viceroy in London—that the English parliament were subordinate to the French parliament composed exclusively of Normans and governed by Norman undertakers for the benefit of the dominant state—that the whole of the English land was held by ten thousand Norman proprietors, many of them absentees—that all the offices of the government, in every department, were in the hands of Normans—that, differing in religion with the English nation, the French, being only a tenth of the population, had got possession of all the national churches and church property, while the poor natives supported a numerous hierarchy by voluntary contributions—that the Anglo-Norman parliament was bribed and coerced to abolish itself, forming a union of England with France, in which the English members were as one to six. Imagine that in consequence of rebellions the land of England had been confiscated three or four times, after desolating wars and famines, so that all the native proprietors were expelled, and the land was parcelled out to French soldiers and adventurers on condition that the foreign 'planters' should assist in keeping down 'the mere English' by force of arms. Imagine that the English, being crushed by a cruel penal code for a century, were allowed to re-occupy the soil as mere tenants-at-will, under the absolute power of the French landlords. If all this be imagined by English legislators and English writers, they will be better able to understand the Irish land question, and to comprehend the nature of 'Irish difficulties,' as well as the justice of feeble, insincere, and baffled statesmen in casting the blame of Irish

misery and disorder on 'the unruly and barbarous nature of Irishmen!'"

The condition of the great mass of the people during the period just spoken of was one of the greatest misery. Exorbitant rents were wrung by the landlords from their unfortunate tenants. Bishop Berkeley gives his opinion on the subject of high rents, by describing Irish landlords as "Men of vulturine beaks with bowels of iron;" much as *The Times*, forty years ago, said that the same class were "exercising their right with hands of iron and fronts of brass." Chronic starvation prevailed. Every penny made by the tenant was seized by his lord; Dean Swift, in his *Maxims Controlled*, says:—"At least five children in six who are born, lie a dead weight for want of employment: . . . above one-half of the souls of this kingdom supported themselves by beggary and thieving, two-thirds whereof would be able to get their bread in any other country in the world." Writing in 1729, he says there were "a round million (half the entire population) of creatures in human figure, whose sole subsistence, put into a common stock, would leave them in debt two million pounds sterling, adding those who are beggars by profession to the bulk of farmers, cottagers, and labourers, who are beggars in effect. . . . In the list of beggars," he says, "I reckon all cottagers, labourers, and four-fifths of the farmers."

The very state of things that suggested Swift's *Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of the Poor People from being a Burden to their Parents*, will give an idea of the extent of Irish misery at the time it was written. "The number of souls," writes Swift, "in this kingdom being usually reckoned one million and a half, of these I calculate there may

be about two hundred thousand couple whose wives are breeders; from which number I subtract thirty thousand couple who are able to maintain their own children (although I apprehend there cannot be so many under the present distresses of the kingdom). . . . The question, therefore, is how this number (one hundred and twenty thousand children annually born) shall be reared and provided for?—which, as I have already said, under the present situation of affairs, is utterly impossible by all the methods hitherto proposed. . . I do therefore offer it to the publick consideration, that, of the one hundred and twenty thousand children already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for breed. . . . That the remaining one hundred thousand may, at a year old, be offered in sale to persons of quality and fortune through the kingdom; always advising the mother to let them suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render them plump and fat for a good table. . . . I have reckoned, upon a medium, that a child just born will weigh twelve pounds, and, in a solar year, if tolerably nursed, will increase to twenty-eight pounds. I grant this food will be somewhat dear, and, therefore, very proper for landlords, who as they have already devoured most of the parents, have the best title to the children." After dilating on the succulent properties of infant flesh for nurses:—"I have already computed the charge of nursing a beggar's child (in which list I reckon all cottagers, labourers, and four-fifths of the farmers) to be about two shillings per annum, rags included; and I believe no gentleman would repine to give ten shillings for the carcass of a good fat child, which, I have said, will make four dishes of excellent, nutritive meat, when he has only some particular friend or his own family

to dine with him. Thus the squire will learn to be a good landlord and grow popular among the tenants; the mother will have eight shillings neat profit, and be fit for work till she produces another child." He then suggests to the "more thrifty (such as the times require) to flay the carcass, the skin of which, artificially dressed, would make admirable gloves for ladies and summer boots for fine gentlemen;" "the establishment of shambles, butchers being sure not to be wanting," and the "buying the children alive, and dressing them hot from the knife as we do roasting pigs." Having thus disposed of the infants, he came to the grown-up portion of the "beggars," and at the suggestion of "a very worthy person, a true lover of his country," recommends that "the want of venison might be well supplied by the bodies of young lads and maidens, not exceeding fourteen years, nor under twelve—so great a number of both sexes being ready to starve in every county for want of work and service. . . . Neither, indeed, could he deny that if the same use were made of several plump, young girls in this town [Dublin], who, without one single groat to their fortunes, cannot stir abroad without a chair, and appear at a play-house and assemblies in foreign fineries which they never will pay for, the kingdom would not be the worse." And lastly, as to "these vast number of poor people who are aged, diseased, and maimed," he was "not in the least pained upon that matter, because it was very well known that they were every day dying and rotting by cold, famine, and filth, and vermin, as fast as could be reasonably expected."

Such is the picture of Irish wretchedness when our population was only one million and a-half, and before the phrase "congested districts" was invented.

Arthur Dobbs, afterwards Governor of Carolina, writing at this period, says:—"What was it induced so many of the commonalty lately to go to America, but high rents, bad seasons, and want of good tenures, or a permanent property in their land? This kept them poor and low, that they scarce had sufficient credit to procure necessaries to subsist or till their ground. They never had anything in store; all was from hand to mouth, so one or two bad crops broke them." Arthur Dobbs, it may be added, in 1732 carried a Bill for the Reclamation of Irish Waste Lands through both Houses of the Irish Parliament, but the indispensable sanction of the Crown was refused.

The misery of the country naturally led, as it always leads, to crime and outrage; and various illegal secret combinations, such as the Whiteboy and kindred organizations, spread amongst the people. Speaking of the rising of the "Right Boys" in Cork and Kerry, in 1787, the Attorney-General, Mr. Fitzgibbon, declared, in a debate in the Irish House of Commons in 1787, it was owing solely to the cruelty of the landlords, and that "the peasantry of Munster, bound to pay £6 an acre rent, and to work for their landlords at 5d. a day, could no longer exist under the wretchedness they endured." On the debate on the Bill to suppress these disturbances, he said:—"I am well acquainted with the province of Munster, and I know that it is impossible for human wretchedness to exceed that of the miserable peasantry of that province. I know that the unhappy tenantry are ground to powder by relentless landlords. I know that far from being able to give the clergy their just dues [Protestant tithes], they had not food or raiment for themselves; the landlord grasps the whole. The poor people of Munster live in a more abject state

of poverty than human nature can be supposed able to bear; their miseries are intolerable."

From this period we read of "The Whiteboys," "The Whitefeet," "The Terryalts," "The Rockites," "The Defenders," "The Levellers," "The Peep-of-Day Boys," "The Hearts of Oak," "The Hearts of Steel," "The Ribbonmen," and other secret combinations formed by the tenants. These societies rudely maintained on the part of the common people, the hereditary struggle for the lands from which their fathers had been dispossessed by Elizabeth, by James, by Cromwell, or by William, to make room for the stranger. Landlordism, however, was upheld by the law, and the Statute Book of the eighteenth century is blotted by ferocious and barbarous enactments, made by the landlords in the interest of their class, to uphold them in the possession of their ill-gotten estates, and to prevent the people from winning back their own. It may be added, that in the nineteenth century they still keep these laws in force, and that for trivial charges arising out of the land agitation of 1880, the Government indicted sundry "agitators" under the Whiteboy statutes, which prescribe a penalty of penal servitude for life, with the addition of being, "if a male, once, twice, or thrice, publicly or privately whipped."—1 & 2 William IV. cap. 44, amending an Act of George III.*

Some of the older secret societies were wholly composed of Protestants, and this, long before the Protestant party in Ulster founded the formidable United Irish organization, which headed the Rebellion of 1798. The aims of the United Irishmen were political rather than agrarian; but years before their day the descendants

* See *Queen* v. *Healy and Walsh*, etc., Cork Assizes, 15th December, 1880, and many subsequent trials.

of the Planters of the North found themselves oppressed by the territorialists, quite as grievously as the most "superstitious" Papists elsewhere; and it is not much more than a century ago since one of these Protestant organizations—the Hearts of Steel—formed in 1772 to resist oppression on Lord Donegall's vast estates—marched into Belfast in armed defiance of the authorities, and rescued from the city jail several of their number who had been captured in some criminal undertaking of the "moonlight" order. The historian also relates, that when the marauders were brought to justice, no Belfast jury could be found to convict them, and the venue had to be changed to Dublin.—See Lecky's *England in the Eighteenth Century*, and Father O'Laverty's *History of Down and Connor*.

These criminals being, however, Protestant, George III. was moved to pity on their behalf, as appears from a letter preserved in State Paper Office, London, and addressed from St. James's Palace, to the Viceroy of Ireland, on April 6th, 1772:—"It has given the King great pleasure to hear that the disturbances in the North of Ireland are likely to be quelled without danger or further effusion of blood; but his Majesty's humanity was, at the same time, greatly affected by hearing your Excellency's opinion, that they owe their rise to private oppression, and that the over-greediness and harshness of landlords may be a means of depriving the kingdom of a number of his Majesty's most industrious and valuable subjects. The King does not doubt but that your Excellency will endeavour, by every means in your power, to convince persons of property of their infatuation in this respect, and to instil into them principles of equity and moderation, which, it is to be feared, can only apply an effectual remedy to the evil."

How much good would have been effected elsewhere in Ireland, had clement intercession been made from high places on behalf of the general body of the peasantry!

In a pamphlet published in 1867, Lord Dufferin sums up the evils of hostile rule in Ireland for two centuries, both to trade and to agriculture:—"From Queen Elizabeth's reign until the Union, the various commercial confraternities of Great Britain never for a moment relaxed their relentless grip of the trades of Ireland. One by one each of our nascent industries was either strangled in its birth, or handed over, gagged and bound, to the jealous custody of the rival interest in England, until at last every fountain of wealth was hermetically sealed, and even the traditions of commercial enterprize have perished through disuetude.

"The owners of England's pastures had the honour of opening the campaign. As early as the commencement of the sixteenth century, the beeves of Roscommon, Tipperary, and Queen's County, undersold the produce of the English grass counties in their own market. By an Act of the 20th Elizabeth Irish cattle was declared a 'nuisance,' and their importation prohibited. Forbidden to send our beasts alive across the Channel, we killed them at home, and began to supply the sister country with cured provisions. A second Act of Parliament imposed prohibitory duties on salted meats. The hides of the animals still remained; but the same influence put a stop to the importation of leather. Our cattle trade abolished, we tried sheep-farming. The sheep-breeders of England immediately took alarm, and the Irish wool was declared contraband by Charles II. Headed in this direction, we tried to work up the raw material at home; but this created the greatest outcry

of all. Every maker of fustian, flannel, and broadcloth in the country rose up in arms, and by an Act of William III. the woollen industry of Ireland was extinguished, and 20,000 manufacturers left the island. The easiness of the Irish labour market and the cheapness of provisions still giving us an advantage, even though we had to import our materials, we next made a dash at the silk business; but the silk manufacturer, the sugar refiner, the soap and candle maker (who especially dreaded the abundance of our kelp), and every other trade or interest that thought it worth its while to petition, was received by Parliament with the same partial cordiality, until the most searching scrutiny failed to detect a single vent through which it was possible for the hated industry of Ireland to respire. But although excluded from the markets of Great Britain, a hundred harbours gave her access to the universal sea. Alas! a rival commerce on her own element was still less welcome to England, and as early as the reign of Charles II., the Levant, the ports of Europe, and the oceans beyond the Cape of Good Hope were forbidden to the flag of Ireland. The Colonial trade alone was in any manner open, if that can be called an open trade which for a long time precluded all exports whatever, and excluded from direct importation to Ireland such important articles as sugar, cotton, and tobacco. What has been the consequence of such a system, pursued with relentless pertinacity for two hundred and fifty years? This—that debarred from every other trade and industry, the entire nation flung itself back upon *the land*, with as fatal an impulse as when a river whose current is suddenly impeded, rolls back and drowns the valley it once fertilized."

The native lawlessness and "turbulence" of the Irish

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being frequently alleged as a cause of their misfortunes, the opinion of two English jurists is worth quoting. Sir John Davies, Attorney-General for Ireland in the reign of James I., and Speaker of the Irish House of Commons in 1613, said :—There is no nation of people under the sun that doth love equal and indifferent justice better than the Irish, or will rest better satisfied with the execution thereof, although it be against themselves, so that they may have the protection of the law when upon just cause they do desire it." Lord Chief Justice Coke, a contemporary of Sir John Davies, wrote :—" Of the kingdom of Ireland I have been informed by many that have had judicial places there, and partly of my own knowledge, that there is no nation in the Christian world that are greater lovers of justice than they are ; which virtue must be accompanied by many others."—*Institutes*, iv. c. 75.

CHAPTER III.

THE UNION TO THE FAMINE.

In 1800 the Act of Union between England and Ireland was passed, by bribing the nominees of rotten baroughs and pocket seats, and dragooning the country into an abortive rebellion, which left the masses cowed and demoralized. All kinds of golden promises were made as to its effect, but everyone of them have been falsified.

Mr. J. R. Green, in his *Short History of the English People*, says:—"Pitt saw that much at least of the misery and disloyalty of Ireland sprang from its poverty. And of this poverty much was the direct result of unjust law. Ireland was a grazing country; but to protect the interest of English graziers the import of its cattle into England was forbidden. To protect the interest of English clothiers and weavers, its manufactures were loaded with duties." The same historian, writing on Ireland under the Georges, says that "for more than a century Ireland was the worst governed country in Europe. England did her best to annihilate Irish commerce and to ruin Irish agriculture. Statutes passed by the jealousy of English landowners forbade the export of Irish cattle or sheep to English ports. The export of wool was forbidden, lest it might interfere with the profits of the English wool growers. Poverty was thus added to the curse of misgovernment; and poverty, deepened with the rapid growth of the native population, turned the country into a hell."

Let us see what was the effect of Pitt's measure on manufactures. In 1800 there were in—

Dublin,	-	90	Woollen manufacturers, employing 4,918 hands,
,,	-	30	Wool-combers, employing 230 hands,
,,	-	13	Carpet-combers, employing 230 hands,
,,	-	2,500	Silk-loom weavers ;
Cork,	-	1,000	Braid weavers,
,,	-	2,000	Worsted weavers,
,,	-	3,000	Hosiers,
,,	-	700	Wool-combers,
,,	-	2,000	Cotton weavers,
,,	-	600	Linen-check weavers ;
Wicklow,	-	1,000	Hand-loom weavers ;
Kilkenny,	-	56	Blanket manufacturers ;
Balbriggan,		2,500	Calico looms at work.

To-day not a vestige of these industries remain, with the exception perhaps of a single tweed factory in Dublin, while of new works to take their place there are practically none. These are but sample instances of decline, for all over the country may be seen roofless factories, idle mill-wheels, and empty storehouses. "I shall do all that in me lies to discourage Irish woollen manufactures" said William III. to his parliament (1698); but the discouragements of restrictive laws in the seventeenth century operated less fatally to Irish trade than the indirect blight brought on every Irish industry by the Legislative Union. In the 86 years it has been in force there have been 11 Acts for the direct relief, otherwise than by the ordinary poor law, of exceptional distress ; 10 for the indirect relief of poverty by public works ; 4 for

giving the poor employment at the public expense ; 4 for contending with famine fever ; 4 for saving from starvation the thousands of children deserted through the poverty of their parents ; 3 for the relief of railway companies unable to proceed with their works ; 4 for the artificial assistance of banks, and for sustaining commercial credit ; and 4 affecting encumbered estates—making in all 43 Acts in fulfilment of Pitt's prophecies of boundless prosperity as the result of his measure.—*The Irish Problem and How to Solve it*, 1883.

The following statistics are from a Report of the Select Committee on Dublin Local Taxation in 1825 :—"Prior to the Union, 98 Peers and a proportionate number of wealthy Commoners inhabited the City [of Dublin]. The number of resident Peers at present does not exceed 12. The effect of the Union has been to withdraw from Dublin many of those who were likely to contribute most effectually to its operation and importance. A house which in 1797 paid £6 4s. is now subject to £30, whilst the value of property has been reduced 20 per cent. The number of inhabited houses has diminished from 15,104 to 14,949. The number of insolvent houses augmented, from the year 1815 to 1822, from 880 to 4,719. In 1799 there were only 7 bankrupts in Dublin ; in 1810 there were 152." Were a report on the city to be called for now, it would tell a still more woeful tale. On the other hand, Lord Clare, the chief Irish advocate of the Union, said in 1798 :—"There is not a nation on the face of the habitable globe which has advanced in cultivation, in manufactures, with the same rapidity in the same period as Ireland," viz. :—during the years of Grattan's parliament. Judge Jebb, in a pamphlet published in 1798, wrote :—"In the course of fifteen years our com-

merce, our agriculture, and our manufactures have swelled to an amount that the most sanguine friends of Ireland could not have dared to prognosticate."

Lord Plunket, in the English House of Lords, after the Union, said :—"Ireland's revenue, her trade, her manufactures, had thriven beyond the hope or the example of every other country of her extent within the few years before the Union, with a rapidity astonishing even to herself."

Daniel O'Connell, when on his trial in 1844, quoted a parliamentary return, showing that from 1785 to 1800 the consumption of luxuries increased in Ireland even to a greater extent than in England. Thus :—

	Increase per cent.	
	in Ireland.	in England.
Tea,	84	45
Coffee,	600	75
Tobacco,	100	64
Wine,	74	52
Sugar,	57	53

The Rev. Charles Boyton, in 1832, speaking at the Protestant Conservative Society of Ireland, gave the number of sheep and cattle sold at Ballinasloe Fair in 1799 and the number exported to England (quoted by Isaac Butt at Home Rule Conference, 18th November, 1873, see also *Thom's Directory* for 1886, pp. 595 and 692.) This fair is the great annual Irish fair, and sales at it give a comparative test of the number of cattle and sheep reared in the entire country.

Let us therefore compare the sales at Ballinasloe in 1799 with 1884, and then contrast the exports of live stock to England from all Ireland in the same years :—

1799.

	Cattle.	Sheep.
Sold at Ballinasloe, -	9,900 -	77,900
Exported to England, -	14,000 -	800

1884.

	Cattle.	Sheep.
Sold at Ballinasloe, -	12,101 -	37,318
Exported to England, -	715,843 -	533,285

There was nearly the same population in the country in both years, and Mr. Butt asks, If the same number of live stock were raised in 1799, what became of the beef and mutton? "There was then an Irish population," he says, "eating meat and paying for it. Now it goes to England. It is only the market that has changed." Some persons quote these increased exports as a proof of prosperity; but the character of the exports makes all the difference, especially when they go to pay for imports of articles which were then all made at home, by the very artizans and merchants who ate the beef and mutton that is now shipped out of the country. Mr. Butt argued that "the very exportations which are the result and proof of our poverty, are paraded as the evidence of that Irish prosperity of which English ministers and Irish placemen are so proud."

But the best tests of the failure of the Union are the repressive laws by which it has been found necessary to coerce the population. For scarcely a single complete year since 1800 has Ireland enjoyed the blessings of the British Constitution. Law and order has been maintained by the following measures.—(See J. S. Leadam's pamphlet on *Coercion*, 1881, and T. P. O'Connor's *Parnell Movement*, 1886.)

1800 to 1805 — Habeas Corpus Suspension. Seven Coercion Acts.
1807 — 1st February, Coercion Act. Habeas Corpus Suspension. 2nd August, Insurrection Act.
1808-9 Habeas Corpus Suspension.
1814 to 1816 — Habeas Corpus Suspension. Insurrection Act.
1817 — Habeas Corpus Suspension. One Coercion Act.
1822 to 1830 — Habeas Corpus Suspension. Two Coercion Acts in 1822, and one in 1823.
1830 Importation of Arms Act.
1831 Whiteboy Act.
1831 Stanley's Arms Act.
1832 Arms and Gunpowder Act.
1833 Suppression of Disturbance.
1833 Change of Venue Act.
1834 Disturbances Amendment and Continuance.
1834 Arms and Gunpowder Act.
1335 Public Peace Act.
1836 Another Arms Act.
1838 Another Arms Act.
1839 Unlawful Oaths Act.
1840 Another Arms Act.
1841 Outrages Act.
1841 Another Arms Act.
1843 Another Arms Act.
1848 Act Consolidating all Previons Coercion Acts.
1844 Unlawful Oaths Act.
1845 Additional Constables near Public Works Act.
1845 Unlawful Oaths Act.
1846 Constabulary Enlargement.
1847 Crime and Outrage Act.
1848 Treason Amendment Act.
1848 Removal of Arms Act.
1848 Suspension of Habeas Corpus.
1848 Another Oaths Act.
1849 Suspension of Habeas Corpus.
1850 Crime and Outrage Act.
1851 Unlawful Oaths Act.
1853 Crime and Outrage Act.
1854 Crime and Outrage Act.
1855 Crime and Outrage Act.
1856 Peace Preservation Act.
1858 Peace Preservation Act.
1860 Peace Preservation Act.
1862 Peace Preservation Act.
1862 Unlawful Oaths Act.
1865 Peace Preservation Act.
1866 Suspension of Habeas Corpus Act (August).
1866 Suspension of Habeas Corpus.
1867 Suspension of Habeas Corpus.
1868 Suspension of Habeas Corpus
1870 Peace Preservation Act.
1871 Protection of Life and Property
1871 Peace Preservation Con.
1873 Peace Preservation Act.
1875 Peace Preservation Act.
1875 Unlawful Oaths Act.
1881 to 1882 — Peace Preservation Act (suspending Habeas Corpus).
1881 to 1886 — Arms Act.
1882 to 1885 Crimes Act.
1886 to 1887 Arms Act.

Hand in hand with these Coercion Acts, Parliament passed a number of others far more hurtful to the daily life of the people, under the pretence of "simplifying the law." For seventy years after the Union the Legislature steadily encroached on the common law rights of the tenants, in a way that the landlord

parliament of Ireland never dreamt of doing. Mr. Gladstone, referring to this in his speech on the day of the rejection of his Home Rule Bill (7th June, 1886), said :—"The old and intertangled usages of Irish law, replaced in an imperfect manner the tribal usages on which landed tenures in Ireland were founded. Parliament swept them away, and exposed the tenant to the action of the landlord, but did nothing to relieve the terrible distress which was finally disclosed by the Devon Commission."

In 1829, W. Bicheno, in his *Economy of Ireland*, p. 64, said :—"The laws in the landlord's favour are already more summary and stronger than they are in England, and he is yet calling for additional assistance. . . . The condition of the peasantry is reduced to a lower scale by every new power that is created. Every fresh law exonerates the proprietors more and more from cultivating the good opinion of their dependants, and, moreover, removes the odium of any oppression from the individual who ought to bear it, to the State." Since O'Connell's time ejectments have been made still more easy.

O'Connell denounced these parliamentary encroachments on the tenants' rights, in a speech delivered in the House of Commons, on the 3rd April, 1846 (*Collected Speeches*, edited by Miss Cusack, vol. ii. p. 201) :—"Although there had been some murders committed in Ireland that were not directly traceable to evictions from land, yet in sum and substance the whole form and state of society showed it was from evictions from land, from the insecurity of land holdings, from the difficulties arising through the want of land, that we must seek for the great and primary cause of all these crimes. The great fault was the land question. The fact was, that

the House had done too much for the landlord, and too little for the occupier. What had been the first measure for the benefit of the landlords? The first statute passed after the Union in favour of the landlords was the Act 56 George III. c. 88, which gave them additional powers to work out ejectments. Up to that time they had not the power to distrain. The statutes of England were not enacted in Ireland towards landlords, but the Act 56 George III. c. 88, gave them powers which were no part of the bargain at the time of the Union. Many parties had taken leases and made contracts without those new powers being in the hands of the landlords. The statute gave them the power of distraining growing crops, keeping them till ripe, saving and selling them when ripe, charging upon the tenant the accumulation of expense. All these powers were first introduced by this statute and conferred upon the Irish landlord. He did not believe there had ever been a more fertile source of murder and outrage than these powers. Thus the source of crime was directly traceable to the legislation of that house, and it was the imperative duty of that house, and every member in it, immediately, or as speedily as possible, to repeal that Act. Then there came the Act 58 George III. c. 39, for civil bill ejectment. First, the power was given upon the growing crop, enabling the landlord to ruin the tenant, and then there came the further power to the landlord of turning out the tenant from his holding. The Act 1 George IV. c. 41 extended the power of civil bill ejectment, and the Act 1 William IV. c. 87 enabled the landlords to get security for costs from defendants in ejectments. Then the Act 1 & 2 William IV. c. 31, gave the landlords the right of immediate execution in ejectment; and the Act 6 & 7 William IV. gave

further facilities for civil bill ejectments. All these were additional powers to the landlord. And it was to these statutes that the late Lord Chief Justice Pennefather referred when he said their object was to forward the interests of the landlord."

Baron Pennefather's words were :—"The entire landlord and tenant code goes to give increased facilities to the landlord. It never entered the head of the legislature to make provision for the tenant; and all these enactments, at least thirty-two, are invasions of the common law, without any declared intention to invade." (Charge to a jury in an ejectment case, Hilary Term, 1843.)

Before the Union we had rack-renting. After it we got rack-renting, evictions, absenteeism, and emigration. The Lords and Commons of Ireland, who were the great landed proprietors of the country had up to this, to a considerable extent, resided in the Irish capital; but after 1800 their business and their pleasures took them across to London, and permanent residence in Ireland was no longer fashionable.

D'Alton, in his *History of the County Dublin*, p. 85, gives a comparative table, compiled from the most approved authorities, of the amount of the annual absentee rental.

1691	-	-	-	£136,018
1729	-	-	-	627,799
1782	-	-	-	2,223,222
1783	-	-	-	1,608,932
1804	-	-	-	3,000,000
1830	-	-	-	4,000,000
1838	-	-	-	5,000,000

In 1830, Mr. Butler Bryan estimated, before a Committee of the House of Commons, the absentee drain at

£3,000,000. Mr. Ensor, "after a minute calculation," at £4,000,000. The total rental of Ireland is estimated at about £16,000,000; and on 23rd April, 1872, a return of Irish Landed Proprietors was presented to the House of Commons (*Thom's Directory* for 1884, p. 743), from which it appears:—5,589 persons, owning 8,880,549 acres, valued for rating at £4,718,497, then resided "on or near their property;" 4,842 proprietors, owning 5,215,264 acres, valued for rating at £2,499,343, lived "usually elsewhere in Ireland, and occasionally on the property;" 821,200 acres, valued at £491,778, were held by public institutions and persons (unclassed as to absenteeism) owning under 100 acres. The remaining 2,973 proprietors, owning 5,129,169 acres, valued for rating at £2,470,816, are set down as "absentees." The return does not include absentee house-owners, such as Lord Pembroke, who draws over half a million from Dublin alone. The Irish Doomsday Book shows that of the 20,000,000 acres in Ireland, 1,942 persons own two-thirds, 744 own one-half, 292 persons own one-third, 14 persons own 50,000 acres each, 12 persons own 1,297,888 acres, 3 persons own 3,000,000 acres, and one person owns 170,119 acres.

Mr. (afterwards Chief-Justice) Blackburne, Commissioner of the Insurrection Act during several years in the south of Ireland, deposed before a Committee of the Lords:—"As to the state of Ireland, any view I suggest would be incomplete without stating the effects of absenteeship. My opinion is that, independent of its abstraction from the country of so much wealth, it produces great mischief to the whole frame of society: in Ireland, I may say, there is the destitution, the want of a distinct class. In ordinary times, the loss of influence and authority, and the

control which belongs to education, to rank, and to property, must be deeply felt in any country; but when it becomes disturbed, I need not say that that which would form the barrier for the protection of the peace is lost in Ireland: and I have now been administering the Insurrection Act in counties where the property of absentees is extensive."

Even measures of political amelioration were wrested to the destruction of the people. An Act had been passed in 1793, giving to every person possessed of a forty-shilling freehold the right to vote for members of Parliament, and this statute exercised indirectly a considerable influence in lowering the social condition of the peasantry; as the great proprietors, by simply leasing for lives the smallest patch of land, were enabled to multiply almost indefinitely the number of their voters, and consequently to increase their political power. "Landlords and middlemen," says the Report of the Devon Commission in 1845, "found the importance of a numerous following of tenantry, and sub-division and subletting being indirectly encouraged, greatly increased." "Landlords," corroborates Mr. Jephson, in his *Notes on Irish Questions*, "considering that every freehold they created added much to their personal and political interest in the country, often, on the expiration of a lease, cut up their farms into several smaller holdings, for the purpose of multiplying voters, and encouraged their leaseholders to divide their lands for the same purpose." "The landlords cut up their estates into ribbons for the purpose of manufacturing freeholders," said Colonel Blacker, quoted by Right Hon. Hugh Law, in debate on Ulster Tenant-right Bill, 2nd June, 1875. Population of course grew denser, and large numbers of the peasantry lived from year to year

on a single acre or two of land sown only with potatoes. Then came the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829, which, on the "judicious mixture" principle of a boon and a blow, abolished the forty-shilling freeholders; and forthwith the landlords, to whom this class of tenant had, except for political purposes, scarcely been profitable, ruthlessly began to clear them off. Emancipation had only been granted, as the Duke of Wellington told the King, "to prevent civil war," and the landlords imitated Parliament in being avenged upon the voters, who at the polls defied both themselves and the Government. By the thousand their hovels were razed, and the Popish vermin sent adrift without a farthing compensation. There being no poor-law in Ireland at the time, even the shelter of the workhouse was not available for the homeless wretches.

To afford a historical view of the conduct of the ruling classes in Ireland, the following testimonials to their general course of action have been collated from unprejudiced authorities :—

Edmund Spencer. — (1552-1559) — "The landlords there most shamefully rack their tenants."

Dean Swift.—(1667–1745)—"Rents squeezed out of the blood, and vitals, and clothes, and dwellings of the tenants, who live worse than English beggars."

Archbishop Boulter.—(1671-1742)—"Here the tenant, I fear, has hardly ever more than one-third for his share; too often but a fourth or a fifth part."—*Letters*, vol. i. p. 292.

Benjamin Franklin—(1772)—in a letter written after a tour of Ireland, said :—"The bulk of the people are tenants, extremely poor, living in the most sordid wretchedness, in dirty hovels of mud and straw, and clothed only in rags. . . . Had I never been in the

American colonies, but were to form my judgment of civil society by what I have lately seen, I should never advise a nation of savages to admit of civilization, for I assure you that in the possession and enjoyment of the various comforts of life, compared to these people, every Indian is a gentleman, and the effect of this kind of civil society seems to be the depressing multitudes below the savage state that a few may be raised above it."

Arthur Young, F.R.S.—(1779)—wrote :—" It must be very apparent to every traveller through that country that the labouring poor are treated with harshness, and are in all respects so little considered that their want of importance seems a perfect contrast to their situation in England. A long series of oppressions, aided by many very ill-judged laws, have brought landlords into a habit of exerting a very lofty superiority, and their vassals into that of an almost unlimited submission ; speaking a language that is despised, professing a religion that is abhorred, and being disarmed, the poor find themselves in many cases slaves even in the bosom of *written* liberty."

Lord Clare (when Attorney-General in 1787).—" The peasantry are ground down to powder by enormous rents."

" Exorbitant rents"—(1791)—*Argument for the Support of the Poor*, Bishop Woodward, p. 15.

" Exorbitant rents."—(1805)—Newenham's *Inquiry*, etc., p. 15.

" Exorbitant rents."—(1806)—Gordon's *History of Ireland*, vol. ii. p. 241, Dublin.

" It is an undoubted fact that, as landlords, they exact more from their tenants than the same class of men in any other country "—(1812)—Wakefield's *Account of Ireland*, vol. ii. p. 795, London.

"Exorbitant rents."—(1818)—Curwen, *Observations on the State of Ireland*, vol. ii. p. 32.

"Exorbitant rents." (1825)—*First Report on the State of Ireland*, p. 38; see pp. 59, 307, 413, 414, 638, etc.

"The Irish landlords, as a class, are needy, exacting, unremitting, harsh, and without sympathy for their tenantry."—(1829)—Bicheno's *Economy of Ireland*.

In 1822, Mr. Wiggins (agent to the Marquis of Hertford) said in his *Hints to Landlords*:—"Irritated by rents too high, even for war prices, by the fallen prices of produce without corresponding reduction of rents and tithes, and by severities which have increased with the difficulties of their collection, the peasantry of Munster yielded to the influence of these and probably of other less apparent causes, and in the winter of 1822 insurrection and outrage became so extended as to require a large army to check their progress."

An English Tory, Mr. Sadler, M.P. for Newark, in a work, *Ireland and Its Evil* (1829), asks:—"Is a system which can only be supported by brute force, and is kept up by constant blood-shedding, to be perpetuated for ever? Are we still to garrison a defenceless country in behalf of those whose property was, generally speaking, originally conferred on the special condition of residence, but whose desertion occasions all the evils under which she has groaned for centuries—property so treated that it would not be worth a day's purchase were the proprietors its sole protectors. But they are aware that their absence is balanced by the presence of a body of military and police, which enables them to conduct themselves with as little apprehension as remorse. The possessions of the entire empire would be lost were such conduct general; and are these so meritorious a class,

that their utmost demands are to be extorted from a distant and suffering country, and themselves protected in the open neglect, or rather audacious outrage, of all those duties, on the due and reciprocal discharge of which the whole frame of the social system is founded? If they persist in this course, let them do so, but let it be at their own proper peril."

"Landlords in Ireland, among the lesser orders, extort exorbitant rents out of the bowels, sweat, and rags of the poor, and then turn them adrift; they are corrupt magistrates, and jobbing grand jurors, oppressing and plundering the miserable people."—1832—Bryan's *View of Ireland*.

"The Irish country gentleman," says the *Dublin Pilot* of 2nd January, 1833, "is, we are sorry to say, the most incorrigible being that infests the face of the globe. In the name of law, he tramples on justice; boasting of superiority of Christian creed, he violates Christian charity—is mischievous in the name of the Lord. Were the Irish government inclined to govern the country with good policy (which, bless its heart! it is not) the greatest impediment it would find would be in the arrogant, besotted, grasping, rack-renting, spendthrift, poor, proud, and profligate country gentleman."

Freidrich Von Raumer, Professor of History at Berlin, who visited Ireland in 1835 and 1841, found it impossible to describe the misery he saw there. It convinced him that "Europe, too, has its pariahs—yet not Europe, but Ireland alone."

Inglis, an English tourist of 1834, said:—"It is undeniable that the condition of the Irish poor is immeasurably worse than that of the West Indian slave."

His countryman, Barrow, the next year said:—"No picture drawn by the pencil, done by the pen, can

possibly convey an idea of the sad reality. . . . There is no other country on the face of the earth where such extreme misery exists as in Ireland."

Gustave De Beaumont, the celebrated French publicist, who was in Ireland in 1835 and 1837, says :—"I have seen the Indian in his forest and the negro in his chains, and I thought that I beheld the lowest term of human misery, but I did not then know the lot of Ireland. . . . Irish misery forms a type by itself, of which there exists nowhere else either model or imitation. In seeing it, one recognizes that no theoretical limits can be assigned to the misfortunes of nations."

Kohl, a famous German (*Travels in Ireland*, 1844), says :—"He had pitied the Letts of Livonia for living in huts built of unhewn logs of trees, with the crevices stopped up with moss ; but having seen the West of Ireland, he regarded the Letts, Esthonians, and Finlanders as living in a state of comparative comfort. He doubted whether in the whole world a nation could be found subjected to the physical privations of the peasantry in some parts of Ireland. A Russian peasant was a slave, but he was housed and fed to his contentment ; the Hungarians were not the best used people in the world ; but even the humblest had good wheaten bread and wine for his daily fare ; in Servia and Bosnia, if the people were badly housed, they were well clad ; the Tartars of the Crimea were poor and barbarous, but they looked at least like human beings ; in short, nowhere but in Ireland could be found human creatures living from year's end to year's end on the same root, berry, or weed. There were animals, indeed, that did so, but human beings nowhere save in Ireland."

Sismondi, the Italian political economist, after a thorough investigation of the subject some fifty years

ago, thought that the government should address these words to the Irish landlords :—"You have endangered the whole British empire, in driving more than a quarter of its population to a distress which but for our intervention could only have finished by a rebellion. You have shaken the foundation of society itself, by rendering the laws of property hateful. . . . The first right of property is that of the cultivator to live on the fruit of his labour, and that right you have violated; we shall interfere henceforth without fear or scruple to guarantee it to him in its entirety. We demand that upon the rich soil of Ireland, in the midst of all its luxuriant vegetation, the Irish peasants shall live at least as well as the peasant of the Prussian sands or of the frozen climate of Russia; that he shall not be worse off than they are for lodging, clothing, food or firing; that he shall enjoy as much rest and as much security for the future as they do. It is only after having insured to him his share that we shall recognize your right to what remains and shall trouble you to insure it also."

Miss Martineau, in her *History of the Thirty Year's of Peace*, says :—"The greater part of Irish landed property had been granted three times over at least during the long sequence of troubles in that unhappy country. As for those in actual possession, too many of them conducted themselves and their property in the way which has made the Irish landlord a bye-word and reproach. The virtuous administration of their estates was not to such the great duty and object in life, that it is usually seen to be in countries where the property is secure as a matter of course, where the tenantry and labourers are regarded by the proprietor as persons to whom he owes serious duties, and where the improvement of the estate for the benefit of heirs is the first

consideration in connection with it. The opposite state of affairs was that which naturally appeared in Ireland."

"What," said Judge Fletcher, in his charge to the Grand Jury of the County of Waterford, in July, 1814, "is the wretched peasant to do? Hunted from the spot where he had first drawn his breath—where he had first seen the light of heaven—incapable of procuring any other means of subsistence—can we be surprised that, being of unenlightened and uneducated habits, he should rush upon the perpetration of crimes followed by the punishment of the rope and the gibbet? Nothing remains for them thus harassed, thus destitute, but with a strong hand to deter the stranger from intruding upon their farms, and to extort from the weakness of their landlords—from whose gratitude and good feelings they have failed to win it—a sort of preference for the ancient tenantry."

Lord Macaulay, speaking of the relations between misery and crime, says:—"We deplore the outrages which accompany revolutions. But the more violent the outrages the more assured we feel that a revolution was necessary. The violence of these outrages will always be proportioned to the ferocity and ignorance of the people, and the ferocity and ignorance of the people will be proportioned to the oppression and degradation under which they have been accustomed to live."

Said Sydney Smith, sixty years ago:—"The mild and the long-suffering may suffer for ever in this world. If the Catholics had stood with their hands before them, simpering at the Earls of Liverpool and the Lords Bathurst of the time, they would not have been emancipated until the year of our Lord four thousand. As long as the patient will suffer the cruel will kick. . . .

If the Irish go on withholding and forbearing, and hesitating whether this is the time for discussion or that is the time, they will be laughed at for another century as fools, and kicked for another century as slaves."

After every outbreak of distress or outrage, Parliament relieved itself by appointing numerous Commissions and Select Committees to inquire into the condition of the agricultural population; but when they reported, there the matter ended. There were always insuperable difficulties in the way of legislation for the benefit of the people. To instance one subject. Between 1810 and 1814 a commission reported four times on the condition of Irish bogs. They expressed their entire conviction of the practicability of cultivating with profit an immense extent of land lying waste. The reclamation of waste lands forms an important branch of the Irish land question. The Registrar-General estimates the total agricultural area of Ireland at 20,327,764 acres. Of this total he reports 4,661,938 acres to be absolutely waste; and Professor Baldwin, a Land Commissioner under the Land Act of 1881, declares that, exclusive of absolute waste, we have 4,000,000 acres more, rendered nearly valueless by the want of arterial drainage. Sir Humphrey Davy says that Irish marshes cover some of the richest alluvial soil in these kingdoms." In 1819, in 1823, in 1826, and in 1830, Select Committees inquired into and reported on drainage, reclamation of bogs and marshes, on roads, fisheries, emigration, and other schemes for giving employment to a population, that had been encouraged to increase and multiply, while the votes of the forty-shilling freeholders were wanted by the landlords, and "war prices" were obtainable for agricultural produce.

The report of that of 1819, under the presidency of Sir John Newport, to inquire into the state of disease and the condition of the labouring poor, opens by stating that the general distress and deficiency of employment "are so notorious, as to render the production of any particular evidence to establish the extent and variety of the evil unnecessary." The committee suggested the adoption of measures for facilitating the development of Irish agricultural resources, and stated that there were 2,000,000 acres of waste bog-land reclaimable.

The report of the Select Committee of 1823 tells the usual tale of misery and want. The condition of the people is described as "wretched and calamitous to the last degree." We are told that they lived in a state of the utmost destitution, with scarcely an article of furniture in their miserable cabins, using as bed covering a "little fern and a quantity of straw thrown over it."

Mr. Wyse, in his evidence before the House of Lords and Commons, 1824, says:—"Landlords take advantage of the dreadful necessity, and exact rent out of all proportion with the value of the land."

In 1825 another crisis arose, and another Select Committee was appointed. Before this committee, the peculiar characteristics and incidents which distinguished the relation of landlord and tenant in Ireland from that relation in England were well pointed out by an English landlord, who was also the proprietor of estates in Ireland—Sir Franklin Lewis, who said:—"Nothing is more striking in Ireland than that a number of burdens which English landlords are willing to take upon themselves, the Irish landlords do not find it necessary to take upon themselves. In the maintenance of a farm in England all

the expensive part of the capital employed upon a farm is provided by the landlord; the houses, the gates, the fences, and the drains, are all provided by the landlords. Everybody knows that in Ireland that is not the practice; at the same time that the landlord obtains as rent in Ireland a much larger proportion of the value of the produce of the land than he obtains in England, and in parts of Ireland it appears to me that the landlord sometimes obtains for rent more than is produced by the land."

Mr. Nimmo, the eminent engineer, was asked by this committee to state his opinion of the condition of the peasantry. He replied:—"I conceive the peasantry of Ireland to be in general in the lowest possible state of existence. Their cabins are in the most miserable condition, and their food—potatoes, with water, without even salt. I have frequently met persons, who begged of me on their knees to give them some promise of employment, that from the credit of that, they might get the means of support." "To what cause do you attribute this state of things?" Mr. Nimmo was further asked. He replied:—"It is unquestionable that the great cause of the miserable condition [of the people] and of the [prevailing] disturbances is the management of land. There is no means of employment, and no certainty that the peasant has of existence for another year, but by getting possession of a portion of land, on which he can plant potatoes. The landlord has, in the eyes of the peasant, the right to take from him in a summary way everything he has, if he is unable to execute those covenants into which he has been obliged to enter from the dread of starvation." "Do you attribute the distressed state of Ireland to the power which resided in the landlord,

and to its abuse?" "I conceive that there is no check to that power. It appears to me that, under the cover of law, the landlord may convert that power to any purpose he pleases. The consequence is, that when he wishes he can extract from the peasant every shilling, beyond bare existence, which can be produced by him from the land. The lower order of peasantry can thus never acquire anything like property; and the landlord, at the least reverse of prices, has it in his power to seize, and does seize, his cow, bed, potatoes in ground, and everything he has, and can dispose of the property at any price."—*Select Committee, House of Lords*, 1825. *Minutes of Evidence*, pp. 165, 179, and *Hansard*, vol. xxxii. SER. III. p. 185.

At the commencement of the session of 1829, Mr. Brownlow brought the condition of the tenant-farmers and labouring classes in Ireland under the notice of the Government. His speech, says Mr. Barry O'Brien (*Parliamentary History of the Irish Land Question*, 1880) was nothing more nor less than a reproduction of much of the matter contained in the Reports and Evidence of the various Select Committees to which reference has been made. He dwelt upon the inactivity of former Governments, and now urged that to save them from starvation, employment should be given to the people, whose condition was "past description and past endurance." "If," said he, "there are millions of unemployed men in Ireland, there are millions of waste land capable of profitable cultivation."

A few months later (on the 16th February, 1830), the Irish Solicitor-General, Mr. Doherty, stated in the House of Commons that a great part of the tenantry of Ireland were "worse off" than the beasts which browsed upon the land;" adding that it was "high time" to

make an effort to ameliorate their condition. (*Hansard*, vol. xxii. N. S. p. 541). Mr. Brownlow passed through the Commons a Bill dealing with waste lands and bogs, but it did not pass the Lords.

A Select Committee appointed in 1830 repeats the old story. A considerable portion of the population, nearly one-fifth, it was said, were out of employment, and a condition of poverty and suffering which "no language can possibly describe, and which it is necessary to witness in order fully to estimate," was laid bare. The report dwells at much length on "the law and practice of landlord and tenant," and directs attention to the various suggestions—such as emigration, the prosecution of public works, and the reclamation of waste lands—which had been made from time to time for remedying the existing disorders. "Your Committee conceives," says the report, "that it is the imperative duty of individuals, of the legislature, and of the Government, to consider what means can be devised to diminish the mass of sufferings, and, at the same time, to secure for the country a better economic condition, promoting the better management of estates, and regulating the relation of landlord and tenant on rational and useful principles."

As usual, nothing was done, although, in addressing the House of Commons on the 11th of November, 1830, the Irish Solicitor-General, Mr. Doherty, said, that "there was then in Ireland the existence of a condition of things which the lower animals in England would scarcely endure, and which, in fact, they did not endure." In this year riots occurred in many parts of the country, and serious collisions had taken place between the peasantry and the police. A very grave state of affairs had, in fact, arisen. It was apparently

the opinion of the Duke of Wellington in 1830, that the landlords were much to blame for the poverty and distress of the people. "If," said he, "persons of estate and property in Ireland would live there, and spend their incomes in it, they would do more to tranquillize the country than all the measures which his Majesty's Government could adopt."

On the 18th of February, Mr. Browne stated in Parliament, that the parish priest of Kilmore, in the Barony of Erris, in the County Mayo, had written him to say that before the end of the month there would be 30,000 people in that district without food. This statement of Mr. Browne was, in its substantial features, corroborated by the Irish Secretary, Mr. Stanley, afterwards Earl Derby. The only remedies, however, which the Government cared to apply were those with which we are so familiar—Arms Acts, Coercion Acts, and Suspension of the Habeas Corpus; and accordingly, while remedial Bills, recommended by the Select Committees, were not passed by Parliament, on the plea of want of time, abundance of time was found to run coercive measures through both Houses. Yet Lord Melbourne declared on the 18th March, 1831, that all the witnesses, Catholic and Protestant, magistrates and others, who were examined before the various Select Committees with reference to Ireland, had with one voice ascribed the disturbed state of the country to the relations subsisting between landlord and tenant.

In giving evidence before one of those Select Committees, a stipendiary magistrate, Major Warburton, said:—"The destitution produced by the turning persons out of their land, when they have no other means of existence, is a very great source of crime, as such a state of things must naturally involve the people in criminal

endeavours to procure the means of maintaining their families." He added that "the causes which produce crime and outrage at present, are the same causes which for many years back have produced the same result."

In 1835, Richard Cobden declared "that no part of England or Scotland is exempt from its share in the natural consequences of the terrible state of degradation to which the Irish people are reduced. There is not a village or parish of the kingdom into which its famine-impelled natives do not, at certain periods of the year, penetrate, to share the scanty wages of our peasantry, thus dragging them down to their own level."

In 1836, the Poor-law Commissioners reported :—"It appeared that in Great Britain the agricultural families constituted little more than a fourth, whilst in Ireland they constituted about two-thirds of the whole population ; that there were in Great Britain, in 1831, 1,055,982 agricultural labourers ; in Ireland, 1,131,715 —although the cultivated land of Great Britain amounted to about 34,250,000 acres, and that of Ireland only to about 14,600,000. So that there were in Ireland about five agricultural labourers for every two that there were for the same quantity of land in Great Britain. It further appeared that the agricultural progress of Great Britain was more than four times that of Ireland, in which agricultural wages varied from sixpence to one shilling a day ;—the average of the country being about eightpence-halfpenny ; and that the earnings of the labourers came, on an average of the whole class, to from two shillings to two and sixpence a week or thereabouts for the year round."

The Secretary to the Poor-law Inquiry Commission, reported that "every family which has not sufficient land to yield its food has one or more of its members

supported by begging. It will therefore be easily conceived that every endeavour is made by the peasantry to obtain small holdings, and that they are not influenced in their biddings by the fertility of the land, or by their ability to pay the rent, but solely by the offer which is most likely to gain them possession. They give up in the shape of rent the whole produce of the soil, with the exception of a sufficiency of potatoes for a subsistence; but as this is rarely equal to the promised rent, they constantly have against them an increasing balance."

"In comparison," says a writer in the *Dublin Review*, July, 1836, "to the mass of suffering which is unsparingly inflicted, the state of popular feeling and action in Ireland is quiescence itself. No; compared to the provocations they receive, we say that the blood of Irishmen is tame—is humble; nor is there any other people in Europe who would have so long brooked the wrongs they have endured, and not risen up in a simultaneous effort to shake off the annoyance of such heavy and contemptible oppressors."

Mr. Tomkins Brew says:—"The cause of Terryaltism in Clare was the tenants receiving 'notice to quit;' that the people of Clare are, in many districts, in a state of great destitution, and likely to be worse next year; that the attacks on houses in Clare in 1837 proceeded from the scarcity of provisions—when a supply came, the outrages all ceased."

"The peasantry are ground down to powder by enormous rents," wrote the *Quarterly Review*, of December, 1840, "which are only paid by the exportation of the great bulk of the food raised in the country, leaving those who grow it a bare subsistence upon potatoes eked out with weeds."

In the debate on the Irish Registration Bill, February, 1841, the late Lord Derby stated, that "persons having from fifteen to twenty acres of land are generally from April to September in a state of the greatest destitution, living on potatoes, without either milk or meat, and considering themselves very happy if they have dry potatoes enough—men who during a great part of the year lived on dry potatoes—men whom the landlords, letting their lands at a rack rent, may upon any day turn loose upon the world, to starve in the last degree of misery."

Lord Normanby, in the House of Lords, 17th February, 1844, declared:—"In Ireland the landlord has a monopoly of the means of existence, and has a power for enforcing his bargains which does not exist elsewhere—the power of starvation."

Discussing, on 16th February, 1844, some of the eternal coercive "remedies," Mr. Disraeli said:—"He wished to see a public man come forward and say what the Irish question was. Let them consider Ireland as they would any other country similarly circumstanced. They had a starving population, an absentee aristocracy, an alien Church, and the weakest executive in the world. This was the Irish question. Gentlemen would say at once on reading of a country in such a position, the remedy is revolution—not the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. But the connection with England prevented revolution. Therefore England was logically in the position of being the cause of all the misery of Ireland. What, then, was the duty of an English Minister? To effect by his policy all the changes which a revolution would do by force!"—*Hansard*, SER. III., vol. lxxii. p. 1016. When reminded of this speech a quarter of a century afterwards, Mr. Disraeli (16th March, 1868) made the

celebrated reply:—"With reference, however, to that passage, which has been quoted from a speech made by me, I may remark that it appeared to me at the time I made it that nobody listened to it. It seemed to me that I was pouring water upon sand; but it seems now that the water came from a golden goblet. With regard to the passage from that speech, there are many remarks which, if I wanted to vindicate or defend myself, I might legitimately make. . . . But I do not care to say it, and I do not wish to say it, because in my conscience the sentiment of that speech was right. It may have been expressed with the heedless rhetoric which I suppose is the appanage of all who sit below the gangway; but in my historical conscience the sentiment of that speech was right."

Yielding to the instances of Mr. Sharman Crawford, Sir Robert Peel was induced in 1843 to appoint what is known as the "Devon Commission" to enquire into the Land Question. This Commission was entirely composed of landlords, and sat for two years. It examined an enormous number of witnesses—landlords, agents, middlemen, tenants, and others; but except that it provided a valuable body of evidence, it might as well never have sat. Said Lord John Russell, speaking of its Report, which was issued in 1845:—"However ignorant many of us may be of the state of Ireland, we have here the best evidence that can be procured—the evidence of persons best acquainted with that country—of magistrates of many years' standing, of farmers, of those who have been employed by the Crown; and all tell you that the possession of land is that which makes the difference between existing and starving amongst the peasantry, and that therefore ejections out of their holdings are the cause

of violence and crime in Ireland. In fact, it is no other than the cause which the great master of human nature describes when he makes a tempter suggest it as a reason to violate the law: 'Famine is in thy cheeks, need and oppression starveth in thine eyes, upon thy back hangs ragged misery. The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law; the world affords no law to make thee rich. Then be not poor, but break it.'"—*Hansard*, 1846, SER. III. v. lxxxvii. p. 507. The Devon Report says:—"A reference to the evidence of most of the witnesses will show that the agricultural labourer of Ireland continues to suffer the greatest privations and hardships; that he continues to depend upon casual and precarious employment for subsistence; that he is badly housed, badly fed, badly clothed, and badly paid for his labour. Our personal experience and observations during our inquiry have afforded us a melancholy confirmation of these statements; and we cannot forbear expressing our strong sense of the patient endurance which the labouring classes have generally exhibited, under sufferings greater, we believe, than the people of any other country in Europe have to sustain."

The Devon Report elsewhere says:—"It is admitted on all hands that according to the general practice in Ireland, the landlord neither builds dwelling-houses, nor farm offices, nor puts fences, gates, etc., in good order, before he lets his land to a tenant. The cases where a landlord does any of these things are the exceptions. In most cases, whatever is done in the way of building or fencing is done by the tenant; and in the ordinary language of the country, dwelling-houses, farm-buildings, and even the making of fences, are described by the general word 'improvement,' which is thus

employed to denote the necessary adjuncts to a farm, without which in England or Scotland no tenant would be found to rent it."

A good example of the manner in which tenants are rented on their improvements is furnished by the records of the Barony of Farney, County Monaghan, of which the history is given by Mr. Godkin:—About the year 1606, Lord Essex, who had obtained a grant of the Barony of Farney, leased it to Evar McMahon at a yearly rent of £250. After fourteen years the same territory was let to Brian McMahon for £1,500. In the year 1636, the property yielded a yearly rent of £2,022 18s. 4d., paid by thirty-eight tenants. A map then taken gives the several townlands and denominations nearly as they are at present. Robert Earl of Essex dying in 1646, his estates devolved on his sisters, Lady Frances and Lady Dorothy Devereux, the former of whom married Sir W. Seymour, afterwards Marquis of Hertfort, and the latter Sir Henry Shirley, Bart., ancestor of the present proprietor of half the barony. Ultimately the other half became the property of the Marquis of Bath. At the division in 1690, each moiety was valued at £1,313 14s. 4½d. Gradually, as the lands were reclaimed by the tenants, the rental rose. In 1769 the Bath estate produced £3,000, and the Shirley estate £5,000. The total of £8,000 per annum from this once wild and barren tract was paid by middlemen. The natives had not been rooted out, and during the eighteenth century these sub-tenants multiplied rapidly. It should be observed here, that in all crown grants, the patentees were charged crown rents only for the *arable* lands conveyed by their title deeds—bogs, wastes, mountains, and unreclaimed lands of every description being thrown in gratuitously,

amounting probably to ten or fifteen times the quantity of demised ground set down in acres. Lord Lurgan's agent, Mr. Hancock, at the commencement of his evidence before the Devon Commission, stated that "Lord Lurgan is owner of about 24,600 acres, with a population of 23,800, under the census of 1841;"—that is, by means of original reclamation, drainage, and other works of agricultural improvement, Mr. Brownlow's 2,500 acres of the year 1619, had silently grown up to 24,600 acres, and his hundred swordsmen, or pikemen, the representatives of 57 families, with a few subordinates, had multiplied to 23,800 souls. Now, Mr. Hancock founds the tenant-right custom on the fact that few, if any, of the "patentees were wealthy;" we may therefore fairly presume that the *settlers built their own houses, and made their own improvements at their own expense*, contrary to the English practice. As the population increased, and "arable" land became valuable, bogs, wastes, and barren land were gradually reclaimed and cultivated, through the hard labour and at the cost of the occupying tenantry, until the possession of his descendants have spread over ten times the area nominally demised by the Crown to their progenitor.

This process went on all over the province of Ulster, so that it would appear that property which in the year 1606 was let for £250, has now been made worth £60,000, solely by the labour of the tenants; in other words—that the difference between £250 and £60,000 of tenants' improvements is yearly confiscated by the landlords.

The London Guilds and Irish Society of London, annually draw in rent from County Derry a sum estimated at £200,000 a year, although £26,611 was the entire money expended on the "plantation" in Derry

by them between 1609 and 1629 inclusive, as ascertained by a Royal Commission in 1642.—(See *The Twelve London Companies in Derry*, published in 1869 at the Belfast *Northern Whig* office.)

For a sample of similar enhancement in the value of confiscated land at the other end of Ireland, the case of the Devonshire Estates in Munster may be cited. It is mentioned at page 6, that Sir W. Raleigh got some 42,000 acres (exclusive, as usual, of waste, bog, and mountain), out of the plunder of the Earl of Desmond's territories. A London judge's clerk, named Richard Boyle, who had graduated in Ireland as a forger, a horse-thief, and conniver of murder, was raised to the Deputy Escheatorship of Munster, about 1590. Raleigh being in prison and straitened, Boyle offered him £5,010 for his 42,000 acres, which being accepted, he paid Raleigh £500 on account, and swindled him out of the balance. Later on, Boyle having now become Earl of Cork, got from James I. patents for all his plunder—the parchments of which, his historian mentions covered a hall forty-eight feet long by three feet wide.* He married all his children into English aristocratic families, and the Duke of Devonshire in this way got his County Cork and Waterford estates, out of which he draws some £30,000 a year, for land which cost his ancestor Boyle £500. His Grace also now claims the fishery rights of the Blackwater, from the town of Lismore to the sea at Youghal (twenty miles), by virtue of James I.'s patent to the horse-thief, and of patents from King John to the monks of Lismore, whose confiscated lands Raleigh got; and in the course of eleven years' litigation, and a dozen trials, has put the unfortunate fishermen of the district

* See an interesting account in *The Monitor*, for November and December, 1879, by the late Thomas Galway, M.A., Agent to Lord Kenmare.

to thousands of pounds expense to assert his right to the river, which is most valuable for salmon fishing. This, unfortunately, by the decision of the House of Lords in 1881, he has now succeeded in doing—King John's grant to the monks being a very sacred matter to the hereditary chamber.

Consequent on the representations of the Devon Commission, Lord Stanley made the first attempt to give something like security to the tillers of the soil, and on 9th June, 1845, introduced a Bill "for the purpose of providing compensation to tenants in Ireland, in certain cases, on being dispossessed of their holdings, for such improvements as they may have made during their tenancy." "The remedy for Irish evils," he said, "is not emigration, but a system under which the tenant would be induced to invest his labour and capital in the land." The Bill being opposed by the landlords, could not be passed through the Lords, and thus commenced that succession of abortive legislative proposals, dealing with the position of landlord and tenant in Ireland, which from 1845 until 1886 have been introduced into Parliament.

Immediately after the failure of this measure, Mr. Sharman Crawford moved for leave to bring in a Tenant Right Bill; but with no better success.

The next year—1846—Earl Lincoln, then Chief Secretary for Ireland, introduced a "Bill providing compensation in certain cases for tenants in Ireland who shall build on or drain farms, and to secure to the parties respectively entitled thereto due payment for such improvements." This Bill was substantially the same as Lord Stanley's of the previous year—and it shared the same fate.

The following session, on the 25th February, 1847,

Mr. Sharman Crawford brought in a Bill "to secure the rights of occupying tenants in Ireland, and thereby promote the improvement of the soil and the employment of the labouring classes." On this day Lord John Russell, then Premier, said, "Their [the Irish labourers] habitations are wretched hovels; several of a family sleep together upon straw or upon the bare ground—sometimes with a blanket, sometimes without even so much to cover them; their food commonly consists of dry potatoes, and with these they are at times so scantily supplied as to be obliged to stint themselves to one spare meal a day. . . . The wives and children of many are occasionally obliged to beg; they do so reluctantly and with shame, and in general go to a distance from home in order that they may not be known."

Famine was now stalking through the land, but Parliament would do nothing for the tenants, and the Bill was lost.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FAMINE TO FENIANISM.

For years before the existence of the famine was acknowledged by the Government, it had been warned of what was coming by English and Irish publicists; but the Executive refused to take any steps until it was too late to prevent the deaths of hundreds of thousands. *The Times*, on 26th June, 1845, wrote:—"The facts of Irish destitution are ridiculously simple. They are almost too commonplace to be told. The people have not enough to eat. They are suffering a real, though an artificial famine. Nature does her duty. The land is fruitful enough. Nor can it be fairly said that man is wanting. The Irishman is disposed to work. In fact, man and nature together do produce abundantly. The island is full and overflowing with human food. But something ever interposes between the hungry mouth and the ample banquet. The famished victim of a mysterious sentence stretches out his hand to the viands which his own industry has placed before his eyes, but no sooner are they touched than they fly. A perpetual decree of *sic vos non vobis* condemns him to toil without enjoyment. Social atrophy drains off the vital juices of the nation."

In October, 1845, the Dublin Mansion House Relief Committee besought the ministry to allow the ports to be opened for food free of duty; but the Free Trade agitation was then in full swing in England, and it would have embarrassed the Tories if the

Corn Laws were suspended. Accordingly (as happened afterwards in 1879) it became a party maxim, for party men to swear by, that there was no distress in Ireland. On 9th December, 1845, the Duke of Richmond told the Agricultural Protection Society, "With respect to the cry of famine, he believed that it was perfectly illusory, and no man of respectability could have put it in good faith, if he had been acquainted with the facts within the knowledge of their society." On 31st December, 1845, Mr. Newdegate, M.P., carried a resolution at Warwick, protesting against the fallacy and mischief of the reports of a deficient harvest, and declaring "there was no reasonable ground for apprehending a scarcity of food." Later on Lord George Bentinck said :—"The potato famine in Ireland was a gross delusion. . . . The cry of famine was a mere pretence for a party object." Lord Stanley declared "famine in Ireland was a vision—a baseless vision."—(A. M. Sullivan's *New Ireland*, p. 60, and Rev. J. O'Rourke's *Great Irish Famine*, p. 104.) Very soon, however, corpses in sufficient number lay by the wayside to convince all whom it might concern that the people were famishing.

In December, 1846, the well-known temperance reformer, Father Mathew, wrote to Mr. Trevelyan, then Assistant-Secretary of the Treasury, that hunger was abroad, and men, women, and children were gradually wasting away. They filled their stomachs with cabbage-leaves, turnip-tops, etc., to appease the cravings of nature. There were more than 5,000 half-starved wretches from the country begging in the streets of Cork. When utterly exhausted, they crawled to the workhouse to die. The average of deaths in that union was over a hundred a week. In the four months from

27th December, in 1846, to the middle of April, in 1847, the number of human beings that died in the Cork workhouse was 2,130! And in the third week of the following month the free interments in the Mathew Cemetery had risen to 277—as many as sixty-seven having been buried in one day. The destruction of human life in other workhouses of Ireland kept pace with the appalling mortality in the Cork workhouse. According to official returns, it had reached in April the weekly average of twenty-five per 1,000 inmates; the actual number of deaths being 2,706 for the week ending 3rd April, and 2,613 in the following week. Yet the number of inmates in the Irish workhouses was but 104,455 on 10th April.

It was only the potato that rotted, and there was plenty of other produce in the country if the people had only eaten it; but they paid their rents and died. From a revenue return presented to Parliament on 18th July, 1849, it appears that Ireland paid, during the three famine years, 1847, 1848, and 1849, ending 5th January, (altogether) in taxes to the British Exchequer £13,293,681, while her starving people exported to England for rent to absentees—595,926 cattle, 839,118 sheep, 698,021 pigs, 959,640 quarters wheat flour, and 3,658,875 quarters oats and meal; while the return states this estimate of exports "is of necessity defective."

The population was only 8,000,000, and the soil of Ireland, according to Sir Robert Kane, in his *Industrial Resources*, is capable, under proper management, of supporting in comfort 20,000,000 souls; M. de Beaumont says 25,000,000; and Arthur Young in his *Tour in Ireland*, vol. ii. pt. ii. p. 24, 100,000,000!!

Indeed, the fertility of Ireland has evoked the

continual surprise of English and foreign writers. Arthur Young, who travelled through it in 1776-8, says of Limerick and Tipperary—"It is the richest soil I ever saw." Wakefield, in his *Statistical Account of Ireland* (1812) says :—"Ireland may be considered as affording land of excellent quality. Some places (throughout Meath in particular) exhibit the richest loam I ever saw turned up by a plough." "Superior to England as a soil."—De Lavergne (*Essay on Rural Economy*). Mr. McCulloch (*Statistics of the British Empire*) :—"The luxuriance of the pastures, and the heavy crops of oats that are everywhere raised, even with the most wretched cultivation, attest its extraordinary fertility." "In the elements of natural fertility," says Mr. McCombie, late M.P. for Aberdeenshire, "only the richer parts of England and very exceptional parts of Scotland approach to it." Mr. MacLagan, M.P., says : —"The tillage lands of the south of Ireland, though not so rich as the pasture lands of Tipperary, Limerick, and the Meaths, are also of great fertility. I join heartily in the eulogium pronounced by Arthur Young and other judges of the richness of the soils of Ireland." —*Land Culture and Land Tenure in Ireland*, 1869.

On 4th March, 1848, commenting upon an inquest held on a family named Boland, who tilled a farm of twenty acres, and died of starvation, John Mitchel exclaims in his *United Irishman* (for editing which he was transported two months later)—"Now, what became of poor Boland's twenty acres of crop? Part of it went to Gibraltar, to victual the garrison ; part to South Africa, to provision the robber army; part went to Spain, to pay for the landlord's wine ; part to London, to pay the interest of his honour's mortgage to the Jews. The English ate some of it—the Chinese had their share ; the

Jews and the Gentiles divided it amongst them; and there was *none* for Boland."

The Hebrew lawgiver ordained, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox nor the ass that treadeth out the corn;" but in Ireland the human beings who produced it were denied their portion.

Throughout the famine, the work of clearance by evictions kept pace with the decimation wrought by hunger and pestilence. Speaking in the House of Lords, on the 23rd March, 1846, Earl Grey thus expressed himself on the evictions:—"It was undeniable that the clearance system prevailed to a great extent in Ireland; and that such things could take place—he cared not how large a population might be suffered to grow up in a particular district—was a disgrace to a civilized country." Lord John Russell spoke in terms no less strong.—"More than 50,000 *families* were in that year (1849), turned out of their wretched dwellings without pity and without refuge. . . . We have made Ireland—I speak it deliberately—we have made it the most degraded and the most miserable country in the world. . . . All the world is crying shame upon us; but we are equally callous to our ignominy and to the results of our misgovernment."

Mr. Butt in his speech on the Land Bill of 1876, quotes the statement of Mr. Ray in his *Social Condition of Europe*, that in 1849 no fewer than 500,000 civil bill ejectments were served in Ireland.

John Mitchel, in his *Last Conquest of Ireland* (*Perhaps*) wrote:—"At the end of six years I can set down these things calmly; but to see them might have driven a wise man mad. There is no need to recount how the assistant barristers and sheriffs, aided by the police, tore down the roof-trees and

ploughed up the hearths of village after village; . . . how in some hamlets by the seaside, most of the inhabitants being already dead, an adventurous traveller would come upon some family eating a famished ass; how maniac mothers stowed away their dead children to be devoured at midnight; . . . how families when all was eaten, and no hope left, took their last look at the sun, built up their cottage doors that none might see them die or hear their groans, and were found weeks afterwards skeletons on their own hearth."

The "consolidation" of farms, through the wiping out of small holdings, is well shown by the following statistics from *Thom's Official Directory*:—"Between 1841 and 1861, the number of holdings not exceeding 15 acres declined 55 per cent., while those above 15 acres increased 133 per cent.; between 1841 and 1861, the farms from 15 to 30 acres nearly doubled in number, and in the same period the farms above 30 acres increased from 48,625 to 157,833. Between 1861 and 1871 farms under 15 acres decreased 12,548; and in the same period farms above 30 acres increased 1,470."

What became of the homeless people? Nobody cared. From 1849 to 1881, 3,200,000 Irish-born persons emigrated. The emigrants, be it understood, are (75 per cent. of them) men and women in their prime—the marriageable population. The old and the young, the weak, the poor and the burdensome, must stay behind and further impoverish the island. "Remove Irishmen," said *The Times* of 22nd February, 1847, "to the banks of the Ganges or the Indus, to Delhi, Benares or Trincomalee, and they would be far more *in their element* there than in a country to which an inexorable fate has confined them."

The *Saturday Review*, 28th November, 1863, spoke

of the emigrants as "the departing demons of assassination and murder" (quoted in T. P. O'Connor's *Parnell Movement*).

According to Father Lavelle, in his exhaustive work, *The Irish Landlord Since the Revolution*, published in 1870, p. 266, the number of houses levelled between 1841 and 1861 was 270,000, representing at least a population of 1,300,000 human souls—all driven to the workhouse, exile, or death. In the parish of Aughagower, he writes, Captain Houston occupies two hundred square miles, out of which every living soul, except a few herds, were banished by the Marquis of Sligo.

An eviction machine of ropes and pulleys was invented by Mr. Scully, a Tipperary landlord of a mechanical turn, for the speedier unroofing and demolition of homesteads, which enabled the crowbar brigades to do their business with much greater surety and despatch.—*New Ireland*, by A. M. Sullivan, p. 122.

Said *The Times* of 25th February, 1847:—"The people of England have most culpably connived at a national iniquity. . . . . Property ruled with savage and tyrannical sway. It exercised its rights with a hand of iron, and renounced its duties with a front of brass. The 'fat of the land, the flower of its wheat,' its 'milk and its honey,' flowed from its shores, in tribute to the ruthless absentee, or his less guilty cousin, the usurious lender. It was all drain and no return. But if strength and industry fared but ill in a land where capital was in perpetual flux and decay, how much more poverty and weakness? In an integral part of the British Empire, on the soil trodden by a British sovereign, the landowner was allowed to sweep away the produce of the earth without leaving even a

gleaning for them that were ready to perish. And they did perish year by year continually by sheer destitution. The whole Irish people were debased by the spectacle and contact of licensed mendicancy and recognized starvation. England stupidly winked at this tyranny. Ready enough to vindicate political rights, it did not avenge the poor. It is now paying for that connivance."

Mr. Bright said in the House of Commons, on 25th August, 1848 :—"Let us think of the half-million who within two years past have perished miserably in the workhouses, on the highways, and in their hovels—more—far more—than ever fell by the sword in any war this country ever waged; let us think of the crop of nameless horrors which is even now growing up in Ireland, and whose disastrous fruit may be gathered in years and generations to come."

Speaking of the wholesale evictions of starving families in that time, the *Dublin Review* (vol i. p. 479) exclaims :—"Let any parent make the case his own. When we are assembled at the domestic hearth with our family about us, let us bring home to our bosom the bare apprehension, that for exercising an undoubted privilege [voting], not only recognized but actually enjoined by the constitution, it were in the power of some brutal tyrant, some abortive, stunted upstart of yesterday, of whom gold, amassed by peculation and public plunder, is the sole nobility, to put out our fire, and drive us away far from that pleasant home; let us suppose him, by the word of his power, destroying our only means of providing for that bright and joyous circle, and turning our children and ourselves adrift, to lead a vagrant, hopeless, scrambling life—disowned, rejected, persecuted, and maligned—could we bear it? Where is

the father's heart that could endure it? What reverence for the law, what sacredness of private property, what abstract right of men to do as they please with their own, would be of force to restrain our thoughts from dark imaginings, and our hands from giving them effect? We frankly avow that we would not submit to such treatment, but would take the law into our own hands, and, if possible, redress ourselves. Our children have a right divine to claim from us that protection which may be denied to them elsewhere; and we cannot recognize any human obligation which should or could constrain us to reject such an appeal. No man owes a moral obligation to an exterminating decree. No man pretending or deserving to be free, would pay it an outward homage, one moment longer than superior force compelled him to bow his neck under its intolerable yoke. These are our deliberate sentiments—the decisions of a mind tutored, perhaps, by some small share of philosophy, and, at all events, not provoked to a passionate or hasty judgment of the sense of personal wrong." And again:—"The persecutors and slanderers of this people talk of their untamable, fierce, and vindictive nature. But, if they believed what they say, would they dare to oppress and to harass them as they do? Would they expel fathers, mothers, infants at the breast, and tottering age, if they really thought that blood alone could slake the burning heart of a ruined Irish peasant? No!"

And how did the people endure their sufferings? In the *Transactions during the Famine in Ireland*, by the Society of Friends, pp. 7-8, this passage occurs:—"We cannot forbear expressing our strong sense of the patient endurance which the labouring classes have generally exhibited, under sufferings greater, we believe, than

the people of any other country in Europe have to sustain."

During the famine, the exiled Irish in America sent over large sums to their friends at home, most of which went into the landlords' pockets to pay the rent. The following statement of sums remitted by emigrants in America to their families in Ireland, *through Bankers alone,* exclusive of money sent privately, was printed by order of Parliament :—

1848	-	-	-	£460,180
1849	-	-	-	540,619
1850	-	-	-	957,087
1851	-	-	-	990,811

Lord Dufferin, in his *Irish Emigration and Tenure of Land in Ireland,* p. 3, states that between 1848 and 1864 the Irish emigrants had sent back to Ireland upwards of £13,000,000. Sergeant Heron, Q.C., in 1862, in a paper read before the Statistical Society, said :—"A sum equal to one-fourteenth of the rental of Ireland is annually received from foreign charitable persons. From 1851 to 1861 £11,000,000 were sent in charity to Ireland from North America by the emigrants. In 1852 Ireland received a larger sum in charity from America than was realized by the profits of the trade of exporting horned cattle to England." From that time to the present it would be reasonable to estimate the exiles' remittances at two millions a year. But the recipients of this bounty benefit little by it. "The jaws of 'landlordism' do devour it up," and thus, to meet their exactions and maintain their state, the landlords, profiting in a double way by emigration, lay the toilers of two hemispheres under tribute, and have the energies of the Irish race on

both sides the Atlantic employed for their behoof. When, however, the race they have expatriated contribute to political organizations founded to relieve their brethren at home from their age-old tyranny, the money is always described in the landlord press as "wrung from the servant girls of New York." Yet it is very doubtful if since the tide of emigration began, the victims of landlordism in America and Australia have in two generations subscribed as much towards agitation, as in a single year they send in payment of rack-rents.

On the other hand, in the depth of the famine, many landlords would not even subscribe to the relief funds to keep their tenants from starving; and as an instance, it is related by Mr. Godkin, that while Lord Hertfort, an absentee, who draws £60,000 per annum from his Antrim estates, for which he or his family never paid a shilling, was deaf to the cries of famishing Christians, whom he was bound by every tie to commiserate and relieve, an American citizen, who owed nothing to Ireland but his birth—Mr. A. T. Stewart, of New York—sent a ship loaded with provisions, which cost him £5,000 of his own money, to be distributed amongst Lord Hertfort's starving tenants; and on the return of the ship he took out as many emigrants as he could accommodate free of charge. In the famine of 1879-'80 the landlords behaved in much the same way, and only admitted the distress when half the world had subscribed to relieve it.

In 1848, Sir William Somerville, then Irish Secretary, brought in another land measure, which was largely a copy of that of Earl Lincoln in 1846, and of course like it was rejected.

On the 23rd July, 1849, Mr. Horsman (afterwards

Chief Secretary for Ireland), moved "that an humble address be presented to her Majesty, praying her to take into her consideration the condition of Ireland." "What have we done for Ireland?" he asked. "Ireland has been truly described as one adjourned debate. We found her prostrate in February; have we raised her in July? Ireland is now entering on the fourth year of famine; sixty per cent. of her population are receiving relief. What are the causes which have produced such results? Bad legislation, careless legislation, criminal legislation, have been the cause of all the disasters we are now deploring."

Speaking in 1849 of the "outrages" to which the people were driven, Mr. Bright thus spoke:—"The first thing that ever called my attention to the state of Ireland was the reading an account of one of these outrages. I thought of it for a moment; but the truth struck me at once, and all I have ever seen since confirms it. When law refuses its duty—when government denies the right of the people—when competition is so fierce for the little land which the monopolists grant to cultivation in Ireland, when, in fact, millions are scrambling for the potato—these people are driven back from law, and from the usages of civilization, to that which is termed the law of nature, and if not of the strongest, the laws of the vindictive; and in this case the people of Ireland believe, to my certain knowledge, that it is only by these acts of vengeance periodically committed, that they can hold in suspense the arm of the proprietor, of the landlord, and the agent, who, in too many cases *would, if he dared, exterminate them.* Don't let us disguise it from ourselves, there is a war between landlord and tenant—a war as fierce and relentless as though it were carried on by force of arms."

Mr. Binn, an English Assistant-Commissioner of Agriculture, in his *Miseries and Beauties of Ireland*, vol. ii. p. 414, declared that "The wrongs which the Irish tenants have endured would have justified a course of conduct incomparably more violent than any which Ireland, in her wildest moments, in her fiercest paroxysms of excitement, has displayed."

Crime and outrage were the inevitable attendant upon famine artificially created; and, as before, Parliament, which would do nothing to amend the Land Laws which produced the evil, was busy with Arms Acts, Coercion Acts, and repressive legislation.

One "sweet boon" of the Legislature to the Irish tenant in the famine time deserves, however, to be mentioned. In 1848 a considerate Parliament passed an Act prohibiting evictions—on Christmas Day or Good Friday! It was further thoughtfully enacted that the roof must not be pulled off a tenant's home—until the inmates had left! What manner of landlords were these who require such restraints to be solemnly imposed by statute?

Sir Robert Peel said, respecting the official report of Captain Kennedy on the Kilrush evictions:—"I must say that I do not think that the records of any country, civil or barbarous, present materials for such a picture. . . . . Three such tragical instances I do not believe were ever presented, either in point of fact or as conjured up even in the imagination of any human being." And he stated further that they were "heard with the expression of the deepest abhorrence by the House of Commons." The "deepest abhorrence" of the House of Commons, however, did not induce it to take steps to prevent the recurrence of the barbarities.

What may be called the case for the agents of the

Ribbon conspiracy has been well put by Mr. Godkin: —"In this self-defensive war, they cannot cope with the armed power of England in the open field; and they are driven upon the criminal resource of the oppressed in all ages and all lands—secret combination and assassination. For this crime they feel no remorse; first, because it is *war*—just as the soldier feels no remorse for killing the enemy in a battle; and, secondly, because their conquerors, and the successors of those conquerors, have taught them too well by repeated examples the terrible lesson of making light of human life. Poor ignorant creatures, they cannot see that, while the most illustrious noblemen in England won applause and honours by shooting down Irish women and children like seals or otters, the survivors of the murdered people should be execrated as cruel, barbarous, and infamous, for shooting the men that pull down the roof-trees over the heads of their helpless families, and trample upon their household gods. These convictions of theirs are very revolting to our feelings; but they are facts, and as facts the legislature must deal with them. If there be a people otherwise singularly free from crime, who regard the assassination of the members of a certain class with indifference or approbation, the phenomenon is one which political philosophy ought to be able to explain, and one which cannot be got rid of by suspending the constitution and bringing railing accusations against the nation. The land war rages at every board of guardians, in every dispensary, in every grand jury room, at every petty sessions, in every county court, in every public institution throughout the kingdom. The land-agent is the commanding officer; his office is a garrison, dominating the surrounding district. He is able, in most cases, to defy the confessional and the altar;

because he wields an engine of terror generally more powerful over the minds of the peasantry than the terrors of the world to come. Armed with 'the rules of the estate' and with a notice to quit, the agent may have almost anything he demands, short of the possession of the farm and the home of the tenant. The notice to quit is like a death-warrant to the family. [Mr. Gladstone, in the debate on the Disturbance Bill, 5th July, 1880, called it "a sentence of starvation."] It makes every member of it tremble and agonize, from the grey-headed grandfather and grandmother, to the bright little children, who read the advent of some impending calamity in the gloomy countenances and bitter words of their parents. The passion for the possession of land is the chord on which the agent plays, and at his touch it vibrates with 'the deepest notes of woe.' By the agent of an 'improving' landlord, it is generally touched so cunningly, that its most exquisite torture cannot easily be proved to be a grievance. He presents an alternative to the tenant; he does less than the law allows. He could strike a mortal blow; but he lends a helping hand. Resistance entails ruin; compliance secures friendship. Give up the old *status*, and accept a new one: cease to stand upon *right*, consent to stand upon *mercy*, and all may be well!"

It was this fear of "the wild justice of revenge," which largely operated in preserving to the northern tenant the security of the Ulster custom, before the Land Act of 1870 gave it something of the sanction of law. "You would have a Tipperary in Down," said the agent of the Marquis of Londonderry, when giving evidence before the Devon Commission of 1843-5, "if you attempted to carry out a curtailment of tenant-right."

Writing about this time, Thomas Carlyle said:— "The woes of Ireland or injustice to Ireland . . .

is a deep matter, an abyssmal one, which no plumb of ours will sound. For the oppression has gone far further than into the economies of Ireland, inward to her very heart and soul. The Irish national character is degraded; disordered; till that recovers itself nothing is yet recovered. . . . We English pay, even now, the bitter smart of long centuries of injustice to our neighbour Ireland. Injustice, doubt it not, abounds, or Ireland would not be miserable. The earth is good, bountifully sends food and increase; if man's unwisdom did not intervene and forbid. England is guilty towards Ireland, and reaps at last, in full measure, the fruit of fifteen generations of wrong-doing."

"The gallows," said Mr. Bright, in a speech at Rochdale (*Collected Addresses*, p. 51) "has been the great preserver in Ireland." And Mr. Froude, in the same spirit, has well remarked in his *English in Ireland*, that with the Government in Ireland "the gallows is the only preacher of righteousness."

In the midst of the famine the Government passed the Encumbered Estates Act of 1848, a crude, desperate and ill-timed measure. The moment selected for this piece of legislation was the one in which the country was prostrated and beggared by famine, and when, owing to the universal failure of crops, most landlords were obliged to defer the collection of rents. Landlord and tenant alike being bankrupted, and credit reduced to its lowest ebb, the creditors of the territorial classes were enabled for the first time to put up to auction the estates of their debtors. In the course of eight years it led to the forced sales of property to the extent of £20,476,000. No provision whatever was made in the Act for securing the rights of the tenantry to the improvements they had effected, or for

guaranteeing them, against the new buyers from the imposition of increased rents on these improvements; nor was any effort made, in spite of the urgent representations of the Irish popular leaders, to create machinery for the establishment of a peasant proprietary. No! Lock, stock, and barrel the land was given over to a horde of speculators, who bought with the deliberate intention of raising the rents, and who were even encouraged in this by the tempting addendum to so many advertisements of sale :—"The lands are lowly rented and the tenants can bear a substantial increase."* Very often, too, the creditors of the bankrupt landlord connived with him to return an inflated rent-roll, and purchasers bid higher under the honest idea that they were buying on the normal rental obtained from the tenants. Then when they tried to exact the rents on the faith of which they invested, they were met by angered peasants, who protested that they were already paying the highest penny the land would yield, and could only be reduced to submission by service of the all-potent notice to quit. The Act has proved a bane to

* An instance taken at random from the daily papers will illustrate the effect of this. In 1883, as reported in the *Freeman's Journal*, an appeal from a fair rent fixed by the Sub-Commissioners under the Land Act of 1881, came before the Land Commission, from Mr. Arthur Blennerhasset's estate in Kerry. The report states :—"Terence O'Donnell holds 37a.; valuation, £19; old rent, £48; judicial rent, £28. About fifteen years ago the late Mr. Thomas Blennerhasset purchased the estate, and in one rise raised the land from £28 to £48. In the Landed Estates Court Rental it was stated, 'The tenants are respectable and most comfortable, the rents are extremely moderate, and may be readily increased.' The same tenant holds a second farm of 35a.; valuation, £19 10s.; old rent, £43 16s. 9d.; judicial rent, £24 10s. When Mr. Thomas Blennerhasset bought the property, he raised the rent from £23 to £48, but three or four years afterwards took away 2a. 3r. of meadow, and reduced the rent to £43 16s. 9d. Timothy Foley holds 30a. 3r. 36p.; valuation, £16 10s.; old rent, £43 0s. 8d.; judicial rent, £23 17s. 6d. The landlord raised the rent from £24 to £43."

Ireland from that time to the present. Chicane, bitterness, exaction, and outrage followed in its train. In the panic it created, estates were sold for a tithe of their value, a proceeding which of course confiscated the property of the landlords, while the property of the tenant in his improvements was also sacrificed, by the raising of rents which invariably followed the dominion of "the new men." It is not too much to say, that most of the purchasers under the Act, in the great rush from 1849 to 1857, have since then screwed the original price of their bargains twice over out of the unprotected tenantry. It may be noted also that out of the £20,476,000 paid as purchase money up to August, 1857, only £2,836,000 was paid by Englishmen or foreigners. Of the 7,489 purchasers to that date, 7,110 were Irish. (Sullivan's *New Ireland*, 142.)

The starvation, eviction, and depopulation of the famine, and the refinements of the "new men" of the Encumbered Estates Act, created such a sense of national alarm and insecurity, that the tenants, in the teeth of their landlords, resorted to public combination, and for the first time put forward a platform for the redress of their grievances. "Agitate, agitate, and you will succeed," was the advice once given by the Marquis of Anglesea to Daniel O'Connell (McCullagh Torrens' *Life of Lord Melbourne*, vol. i. p. 320), and five years after the Repeal movement had been killed by the Liberator's death and the famine, a great agrarian agitation was set on foot. In 1852 a majority of the Irish representatives was returned to Parliament to support the cry of the "Tenant League."

The claims of the new organization were embodied in a Bill which was entrusted to Mr. Sharman Crawford. Viewed in the light of later events, these demands seem

very moderate, being, roughly speaking, the extension of the Ulster custom (which entitled an outgoing tenant to sell his good-will) to the whole of Ireland; and had they been accepted by the landlords, the land question might have been set at rest for our time.

In March, 1852, Mr. Crawford's Bill came on for second reading; but it was defeated by a majority of 167 to 57. Six months later Mr. Napier, the Irish Attorney-General, obtained leave to present to the House a new code for regulating the relations of landlord and tenant in Ireland. This passed the Commons, but was afterwards rejected by the Lords. The Lords would not have one Bill, and the Commons would not have another. Between "both their houses" the farmers of Ireland were prettily bestowed!

Evictions were going on nearly as rapidly as ever, so that *The Times* declared, somewhere in 1852, that "the name of an Irish landlord *stinked* in the nostrils of Christendom." Alluding to the prevailing agitation, the existence of agrarian outrages, and the disturbed condition of Ireland generally in 1852, Mr. Bright said:—"It was in the eternal decrees of Providence that so long as the population of a country were prevented from the possibility of possessing any portion of their native soil by legal enactments and legal chicanery, these outrages should be committed, were they but as beacons and warnings to call the legislature to a sense of the duties it owed to the country which it governed."

It was said about this date, by Earl Grey:—"Ireland is the one deep blot upon the brightness of British honour;" "Ireland is our disgrace;" "the evils of Ireland could only be produced by misgovernment."

Writing in March, 1854, the *Quarterly Review* exclaims:—"Moderation," indeed! when one witnesses

"the cabins of the peasantry pulled down in such numbers as to give the appearance, throughout whole regions of the south, and still more of the west, of a country devastated and desolated by the passage of a hostile army."

In a speech on the Regium Donum, House of Commons, 6th July, 1854, Mr. Bright speaks of "those western counties, in which no man can travel without feeling that some enormous crime has been committed by the government under which that people live."

Alluding to this state of things, *The Times* said:—"We must gird our loins to encounter the nemesis of seven centuries of misgovernment. To the end of time, 100,000,000 of people, spread over the largest habitable area in the world, and confronting us everywhere by sea and land, will remember that their forefathers paid tithes to the Protestant clergy, rent to absentee landlords, and a forced obedience to the laws which these had made."

The organization formed by the Tenant League in 1852 did not hold together long. In 1855 the Government broke up its parliamentary party of "Independent Opposition," by purchasing or corrupting several of its leaders, and thereupon Mr. Gavan Duffy, M.P., who thirteen years before had founded *The Nation*, and made it famous, quitted Ireland in disgust. In a farewell address to his countrymen he declared that until purer days returned "there was no more hope for Ireland than for a corpse on the dissecting table." From time to time afterwards efforts continued to be made by various Irish Members to promote a legislative settlement of the land question; but they ended in continual failure. Even in those good old days of meek and

hum-drum parliamentary action your Irish Member was always "too extreme."

On 28th of May, 1857, Mr. G. H. Moore asked for leave to bring in what was practically the rejected Tenants' Compensation Bill of the Napier Code, but he found it impossible to obtain time for its discussion.

Next year Mr. Maguire reintroduced the same Bill; and it was defeated by a majority of 200 to 65. "Tenant-right," said Lord Palmerston, "is landlord wrong."

In 1860 the Government passed an Act which rather worsened the tenant's position. It facilitated ejectments, and rendered any right of the tenant, either as to duration of tenancy or compensation, dependent on an expressed or implied contract. Yet at the time "Deasy's Act" was spoken of (by the landlords) as a settlement of the question!

Addressing the Statistical Society, May, 1864, Mr. Sergeant Heron (who became, in 1881, a prosecuting counsel in *The Queen* v. *Parnell and Others*), said:— "Under the present laws, no Irish peasant able to read and write ought to remain in Ireland. If Ireland were an independent country, in the present state of things, there would be a bloody insurrection in every county, and the peasantry would ultimately obtain the property in land, as they have obtained it in Switzerland and in France." Commenting on these words, Isaac Butt, in his *Irish People and Irish Land*, p. 261, properly points out, that "they were not spoken at any excited popular meeting, carrying away the speaker by the passions of a crowd: they were read at a meeting of a scientific body, presided over by grave eminent personages, and in the *Transactions* of that body they first saw the light of publication."

No later than 1869, Mr Bright declared to his constituents, that were Ireland removed one thousand miles westward into the Atlantic, the Irish proprietors would, almost one and all, be hurled into the ocean in a day.—*Collected Addresses.*

Mr. Froude said in 1872, lecturing in America, that "he would not yield to the most irreconcilable Fenian of them all in his determination to promote the entire, the final emancipation of the Irish peasant from the yoke of landlordism."

Mr. Gladstone, speaking on the state of Ireland, 16th March, 1868, said:—"It is impossible to express the satisfaction with which we may now say that it was nothing but the extremity of want and misery which led to those outrages, prompted by what Mr. O'Connell called 'the wild justice of revenge,' which so long formed the scandal of Ireland. Immediately the sharp sting of want is either removed or rendered less pungent in its application, the Irish people, by their immunity from vice, attract the admiration of this country. . . . That fact, which if it be a fact, is one of immeasurable gravity—that the mass of human beings who inhabit that country and are dependent on their industry, had not due security for the fruits of their industry in the tenure of the land—that fact was brought again and again from the most authoritative and unsuspected sources under the notice of Parliament; Bill after Bill was produced, and Bill after Bill was rejected or evaded, and to this hour the account of the Irish nation with England in respect of the tenure of land remains an unsettled question. The only Bill that was passed was that of Mr. Cardwell, in which an attempt was made, in terms the most restricted, to obtain some concession to the tenant on account of improvements to which the landlord was not

an objecting party. That Bill was as much as by any magic could be extracted at the time from the will of Parliament. That Bill remains a dead letter, and the whole subject remains for us to face, with the painful reflection, that for twenty-four or twenty-five years the Irish people in their little plots and farms have thus been conducting the daily battle of life, without the shelter which the Devon Commission, and the Peel Government, and the Derby Government, and every other administration declared ought to be vouchsafed to them; and we have to make the sad confession of our impotence to discharge a primary debt of justice to that country."

Mr. J. Boyd Kinnear, M.P., who on 7th June, 1886, voted against Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, in a leaflet published in June, 1884, thus sums up the case against the Union Parliament:—"From 1800 to 1870 there were some forty coercion bills *passed* for Ireland. Between 1819 and 1830 five Royal Commissions and Select Committees took evidence (and the evidence would break your hearts); and between 1829 and 1869 there were twenty-seven Bills and Resolutions offered by Irish Members on the Land Question, and every one was *rejected*. Yet all these Bills were of the most moderate character. No matter what they proposed, the Irish Members could not obtain a hearing in the English Parliament. Yet the Land Question involved the life and death of 6,000,000 of Irish human beings. Of these 6,000,000, about one-half have perished or been driven into exile by evictions since 1845. Think of it! And all this by laws which you, the people of England and Scotland, have enforced upon Ireland." In a pamphlet on *Ireland* (p. 5), published in 1881—the same Mr. Kinnear, after alluding to the way in which Ireland has always been ruled by

foreigners, according to their foreign ideas, exclaims :— "Would Scotland be contented with such a system? Assuredly not. Before ten years were out, there would be a smouldering rebellion from one end of the country to the other, and an English official's life would not be safe beyond the radius of a policeman's baton."

In the height of the Fenian scare in 1866, another attempt was made to settle the land question. On the 30th April in that year Mr. Chichester Fortescue (now Lord Carlingford) brought in a Bill to amend the Act of 1860. The effect of that Act, he said, was that the tenant, before improving, had to ask the landlord's consent; and this he described as "an invitation to the landlord to dissent." He now proposed that in the absence of any written contract to the contrary, the tenant should, by the general rule of law, have a *limited* beneficial interest in the permanent improvement executed at his own cost. The Bill fell through.

Mr. Bright said in the House of Commons, on 17th February, 1866 :—"Except on two emergencies Parliament has done nothing for the people of Ireland; and, more than that, their complaints have been met—complaints of their sufferings have been met—often by denial, often by insult, often by contempt." The same year the Government proposed the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland, and Mr. Bright said :— "You may pass this Bill, you may put the Home Secretary's five hundred men into gaol—you may do more than this, you may suppress the conspiracy and put down the insurrection; but the moment it is suppressed there will still remain the germs of this malady, and from those germs, as heretofore, there will spring another crop of insurrection and another harvest of misfortune. And it may be that those who sit here

eighteen years after this moment will find another Ministry and another Secretary of State ready to propose to you another administration of the same ever-failing and ever-poisonous medicine." How sadly this recalls the votes and speeches of the great tribune in 1881, 1882, and 1886.

Mr. Bright, speaking in Dublin, 2nd November, 1866, said:—"I have thought, if I could be in all other things the same but by birth an Irishman, there is not a town in this island I would not visit for the purpose of discussing the great Irish question, and of rousing my countrymen to some great and united action. I do not believe in the necessity of widespread and perpetual misery. I do not believe that we are placed on this island and on this earth, that one man may be great and wealthy, and revel in every profuse indulgence, and five, six, nine, or ten men shall suffer the abject misery which we see so commonly in the world. With your soil, your climate, and your active and spirited race, I know not what you might not do."

A few days before (October 30th), Mr. Bright alluded to that supposed inherent depravity of the Irish character, which Mr. Gladstone, on the night of the first reading of his Home Rule Bill (13th April, 1886), humorously ascribed to "a double dose of original sin." Mr. Bright then said:—"Some say that there is some radical defect in the Irish character which prevents the condition of Ireland being so satisfactory as the condition of England and Scotland. Now, I am inclined to believe that whatever there is that is defective in any portion of the Irish people, comes, not from their race but from their history, and from the conditions to which they have been subjected. . . . I say that it would be much more probable

that the defect lies in the Government and in the law."

On the same subject, Sir George Cornwall Lewis said:—"Before I went to Ireland I had very strong opinions as to the influence of *race* on the Irish character. But when I came to look at things more nearly, and to see all the demoralizing influences to which they have been and are subjected, I asked myself whether a people of Germanic race would have turned out much better; and I really could not answer in the affirmative. . . . *Cæteris paribus*, I would sooner have a German than a Celt, and a Protestant than a Catholic; but I have no doubt that a peasantry of Catholic Celts may be so governed, and placed under such moral influences, as to be peaceable, industrious, and contented; and I have no doubt that a peasantry of Protestant Germans might, if properly oppressed and brutalized, be made as bad as the Irish."—*Letters*, pp. 49–50.

On 18th February, 1867, another Land Bill was brought in, this time by the Tories, which proposed that, instead of obtaining the landlord's consent before making improvements, the tenants should obtain the consent of a "commissioner of improvements." This was simply going back to Lord Stanley's Bill of 1845. The proposal was abandoned. A return moved for in this session by Lord Belmore showed that in the preceding six years there had been 37,164 ejectments.

In January and February, 1867, Lord Dufferin wrote three letters to *The Times*, in one of which he says:—"Some human agency or other must be accountable for the perennial desolation of a lovely and fertile island, watered by the fairest streams, caressed by a clement atmosphere, held in the embrace of a sea whose affluence fills the richest harbours of the world, and inhabited by

a race valiant, tender, generous, gifted beyond measure with the power of physical endurance, and graced with the liveliest intelligence."

Glowing as is this description, it is not more so than that of Lord Bacon, two and a half centuries before :— "For this island, it is endowed with so many dowries of nature, considering the fruitfulness of the soil, the ports, the rivers, the fishings, the quarries, the woods, and other materials, and especially the race and generation of men—valiant, hard and active, as it is not easy, no not upon the continent, to find such confluence of commodities, if the hand of men did join with the hand of nature."—*Bacon's Works,* vol. iii. p. 321.

Dr. Drew, the well-known Presbyterian minister, in a letter to Isaac Butt in 1868, sadly wrote:—"I wish my lot had never been cast in rural places. As a clergyman I hear what neither landlords nor agents ever hear. I see the depression of the people; their sighs and groans are before me. They are brought so low as often to praise and glorify those who in their secret hearts are the objects of abhorrence. All this came out gradually before me. Nor did I feel as I ought to feel in their behalf until, in my own person and purse, I became the victim of a system of tyranny which cries from earth to heaven for relief. Were I to narrate my own story it would startle many." On 27th January, 1868, John Bright wrote:—"The English people are in complete ignorance of Irish wrongs, and know little or nothing of the real condition of Ireland. This is a sad picture, but it is not coloured too darkly."

Cardinal Manning, in a letter to Earl Grey in 1868 (republished in 1881) said :—"The land question means hunger, thirst, nakedness, notice to quit, labour spent in vain, the toil of years seized upon, the breaking up of

houses, the misery, sicknesses, deaths of parents, children, wives, the despair and wildness which spring up in the hearts of the poor, when legal force, like a sharp harrow, goes over the most sensitive and vital rights of mankind. All this is contained in the land question."

In a pastoral dated 20th February, 1871, the Most Rev. Dr. Nulty, Bishop of Meath, in a pastoral bitterly denouncing the outrages of the Ribbon Society, went on to allude to the outrages of the landlords in County Westmeath :—"In the very first year of our ministry, as a Missionary Priest in this diocese, we were an eye-witness of a cruel and inhuman eviction, which even still makes our heart bleed as often as we allow ourselves to think of it. Seven hundred human beings were driven from their homes in one day, and set adrift on the world, to gratify the caprice of *one*, who before God and man, probably deserved less consideration than the last and least of them. And we remember well that there was not a single shilling of rent due on the estate at the time, except by one man; and the character and acts of that man made it perfectly clear that the agent and himself quite understood each other. The crowbar brigade, employed on the occasion to extinguish the hearths and demolish the homes of honest, industrious men, worked away with a will at their awful calling until evening. At length an incident occurred that varied the monotony of the grim, ghastly ruin which they were spreading all around. They stopped suddenly, and recoiled panic-stricken with terror from two dwellings which they were directed to destroy with the rest. They had just learned that a frightful typhus-fever held those houses in its grasp, and had already brought pestilence and death to their inmates. They

therefore supplicated the agent to spare these houses a little longer; but the agent was inexorable, and insisted that the houses should come down. The ingenuity with which he extricated himself from the difficulties of the situation, was characteristic alike of the heartlessness of the man and of the cruel necessities of the work in which he was engaged. He ordered a large winnowing-sheet to be secured over the beds in which the fever victims lay—fortunately they happened to be perfectly delirious at the time—and then directed the house to be unroofed cautiously and slowly, 'because,' he said, 'he very much disliked the bother and discomfort of a coroner's inquest.' I administered the last sacrament of the Church to four of these fever victims next day; and, save the above-mentioned winnowing sheet, there was not then a roof nearer to me than the canopy of heaven.

"The horrid scenes I then witnessed I must remember all my life long. The wailing of women—the screams, the terror, the consternation of children—the speechless agony of honest, industrious men—wrung tears of grief from all who saw them. I saw the officers and men of a large police force, who were obliged to attend on the occasion, cry like children, at beholding the cruel sufferings of the very people whom they would be obliged to butcher had they offered the least resistance. The heavy rains that usually attend the autumnal equinoxes descended in cold, copious torrents throughout the night, and at once revealed to those houseless sufferers the awful realities of their condition. I visited them next morning, and rode from place to place administering to them all the comfort and consolation I could. The appearance of men, women, and children, as they emerged from the ruins of their former

homes—saturated with rain, blackened and besmeared with soot, shivering in every member from cold and misery—presented positively the most appalling spectacle I ever looked at. The landed proprietors in a circle all around—and for many miles in every direction—warned their tenantry, with threats of their direst vengeance, against the humanity of extending to any of them the hospitality of a single night's shelter. Many of these poor people were unable to emigrate with their families; while at home the hand of every man was thus raised against them. They were driven from the land on which Providence had placed them; and, in the state of society surrounding them, every other walk of life was rigidly closed against them. What was the result? After battling in vain with privation and pestilence, they at last graduated from the workhouse to the tomb; and in a little more than three years nearly a fourth of them lay quiet in their graves.

"The eviction which I have thus described, and of which I was an eye-witness, must not be considered an isolated exceptional event which could occur only in a remote locality, where public opinion could not reach and expose it. The fact is quite the reverse. Every county, barony, poor-law union, and indeed every parish in the diocese, is perfectly familiar with evictions that are oftentimes surrounded by circumstances, and distinguished by traits of darker and more disgusting atrocity. Quite near the town in which I write [Mullingar], and in the parish in which I live, I lately passed through what might be characterized as a wilderness, in which, as far as the eye could reach, not a single human being, not the vestige of a human habitation, was anywhere discernible. It was only with great difficulty, and much uncertainty too, that I was

able to distinguish the spot on which, till lately, stood one of the most respectable houses of this parish. A few miles farther on I fell in with the scene of another extensive clearance, in which the houses that had sheltered three hundred human beings were razed to the ground some few years ago. That same proprietor desolated, in an adjoining parish, a densely-populated district, by batches of so many families in each of a series of successive clearances. Seventeen families formed the first batch."

Speaking in the County Longford, in 1869, the Earl of Granard said:—"The necessity for reform [of the land laws] has been urged upon Parliament since the days of O'Connell up to the present time. The want of reform upon the most vital question which affects the prosperity of Ireland has been the fruitful source of agrarian disturbance, of poverty, and of misfortune in every county in Ireland. . . . I say it advisedly, that to the system of land laws which we hope to alter —which, at least, we are here to protest against—are to be attributed those fearful agrarian outrages which disgrace the fair fame of our country. A celebrated minister of police in France, whenever he heard of a conspiracy, used to ask, 'Who was the woman?' believing that there was always one mixed up with such organizations; and in a similar spirit, whenever I hear of an outrage in Ireland, I am always inclined to inquire, 'Who is the landlord?' For I do not hear of such things occurring on estates where justice and fair play are the rule and not the exception."

Lord Clarendon, in a speech at the West Herts Agricultural Society, on the 26th of September, 1869, said:—"If he were to take a farm at will upon which the landed proprietor never did and never intended to do anything,

and were to build upon the farm a house and homestead, and effectually drain the land, and then be turned out on a six months' notice by his landlord, would any language be strong enough, not forgetting the language made use of at the public meetings and in the press recently in this country, to condemn such a *felonious act* as that?"

In the preface to his work, *Progress and Poverty*, Henry George, speaking of the present system of land tenure, says:—"It is a toll levied upon labour, constantly and continuously. Every blow of the hammer, every stroke of the pick, every thrust of the shuttle, every throb of the steam-engine, pays it tribute. It levies upon the earnings of men who, deep under ground, risk their lives, and of those who, over white surges, hang to reeling masts; it claims the just reward of the thrifty, and the fruits of the inventor's patient effort; it takes little children from play and from school, and compels them to work before their bones are hard or their muscles firm; it robs the shivering of warmth, the hungry of food, the sick of medicine, the anxious of peace. It debases, and embrutes, and embitters."

"The land of Ireland"—writes Mr. Mill—"the land of any country, belongs to the people of that country. The individuals called landowners have no right, in morality and justice, to anything but the rent or compensation for its saleable value. When the inhabitants of a country quit the country *en masse*, because its government will not make it a place fit for them to live in, the government is judged and condemned. It is the duty of Parliament to reform the land tenure in Ireland. There is no necessity for depriving the landlords of one farthing of the pecuniary value of their legal rights; but

justice requires that the actual cultivators should be enabled to become in Ireland what they will become in America—proprietors of the soil which they cultivate."—*Political Economy.* c. x. p. 201, ed. 1880.

"The Irish circumstances and the Irish ideas as to social and agricultural economy," says Mr. Mill elsewhere, "are the general ideas and circumstances of the human race. It is the English ideas and circumstances that are peculiar. Ireland is in the main stream of human existence, and human feeling and opinion. It is England that is in one of the lateral channels."—(*Hansard,* 17th May, 1866.)

Mill further says:—"What has been epigrammatically said in the discussion on 'peculiar burthens' is literally true when applied to them; that the greatest 'burthen on land' is the landlords. Returning nothing to the soil, they consume its whole produce, minus the potatoes strictly necessary to keep the inhabitants from dying of famine: and when they have any purpose of improvement, the preparatory step usually consists in not leaving even this pittance, but turning out the people to beggary, if not to starvation. When landed property has placed itself on this footing it ceases to be defensible, and the time has come for making some new arrangement of the matter. When the 'sacredness of property' is talked of, it should always be remembered that any such sacredness does not belong in the same degree to landed property. No man made the Land. It is the original inheritance of the whole species. Its appropriation is a question of general expediency. When private property in land is not expedient it is unjust. It is no hardship to any man to be excluded from what others have produced: they were not bound to produce it for his use; and he loses nothing by not sharing in

what otherwise would not have existed at all. But it is some hardship to be born into the world, and to find all nature's gifts previously engrossed and no place left for the new comer. To reconcile people to this, after they have once admitted into their minds the idea that any moral rights belong to them as human beings, it will always be necessary to convince them that the exclusive appropriation is good for mankind on the whole, themselves included. But this is what no sane human being could be persuaded of, if the relation between the landowner and the cultivator were the same everywhere as it has been in Ireland."

Herbert Spencer, in his *Social Statics*, chap. ix. sec. 2, says :—"Equity does not permit property in land. For if one portion of the earth's surface may justly become the possession of an individual, held for his sole use and benefit, as a thing to which he has an exclusive right, then other portions of its surface may be so held, and our planet may thus lapse into private hands. It follows that if the landowners have a valid right to its surface, all who are not landowners have no right at all to its surface. Hence such can exist on the earth by sufferance only. They are all trespassers. Save by permission of the landlords they can have no room for the soles of their feet—nay, these landless men may be equitably expelled from the earth altogether."

According to a recognized legal text-book, "The first thing the student has to do is to get rid of the idea of absolute ownership [of land]. Such an idea is quite unknown to the English law. No man is in law the absolute owner of lands. He can only hold an estate in them."—*Williams on Real Property*, p. 16. "All landowners are merely tenants in the eye of the law."—*Ibid.* p. 55.

CHAPTER V.

FENIANISM TO THE LAND LEAGUE.

The foundation of the Fenian organization in America was the first penalty England had to pay for the crimes of Irish landlordism during the famine; the creation of the Land League was the second. Millions of Celts had been swept off to the United States, hunted like rats out of their dwellings, and there the exiles planned and plotted vengeance against the power that drove them out. Yet Englishmen are asked for gratitude by the "loyal minority," for their good offices to the empire in turning against it the hearts and minds of these millions of men. For twenty years Fenianism has been a source of anxiety to British statesmen. To its "intensity" Mr. Gladstone attributed the Disestablishment of the Irish Church and the attention at length arrested in Parliament for Irish grievances. When the chain and gibbet had broken the strength and destroyed the leaders of the organization, a desperate residuum of the conspirators fomented fresh disorders, and invested London itself with a horrid terror. For all this England owes grateful thanks to the handful of "loyal subjects" who, relying on Acts of Parliament and defying the laws of God, were enabled to rob and torture, and expel by the hundred thousand, a defenceless and disarmed peasantry.

Mulhall's *Dictionary of Statistics* gives the following statistics of evictions of *families* in Ireland:—

	Families Evicted.	Re-admitted as Caretakers.
1849-51, -	263,000	- 73,000
1852-60, -	110,000	- 28,000
1861-70, -	47,000	- 8,000
1871-80, -	41,000	- 6,000
1881-82, -	21,000	- 4,000
Total 33 years, -	482,000	- 119,000

Thus the number of *persons* actually evicted (on an average of 5 per family) was over 2,000,000 (say 70,000 per annum), about 35 per cent. of the population.

Lord Derby, addressing the House of Lords on the second reading of the Land Act of 1870, said :—"I ask you whether the Irish Church would not now have probably been standing upon its legs but for the Fenian agitation ? I will also ask whether this Bill in its present form would have been likely to pass through both Houses of Parliament, if it had not been for long-continued agitation, supported by many most unjustifiable acts of violence ?"

After a delay of generations, a statesman at length arose with both will and courage to grapple with the Irish Land Question. Mr. Gladstone, at the head of a great Liberal majority, disestablished the Irish Church in 1869, and on the 14th March, 1870, his first attempt to "Amend the Law of Landlord and Tenant in Ireland" came on for second reading. In the debates on this Bill, Mr. Gladstone, speaking of the difference between England and Ireland, said :—"It is only the skeletons of the laws of the two countries that bear any resemblance to each other. The flesh and the blood with which the figures are invested are wholly different. All the circumstances, all the associations, and all the

accretions that have grown around the native ideas, are different in the one country from what they are in the other. We cannot name a point in which the relation of landlord and tenant in Ireland and in Great Britain are the same, except only in what may be called the abstract and general idea." Speaking of the many previous attempts to grapple with the subject, its author said:—"Having witnessed the disorder and difficulty which have arisen from this long procrastination, we shall resolve in mind and heart, by a manful effort, to close and seal up for ever, if it may be, this great question, which so intimately concerns the welfare and happiness of the people of Ireland."—(*Hansard*, III. cxcix. p. 335.) The Bill was as much as Parliament at the time would allow Mr. Gladstone to grant. It was read a second time by 442 to 11. But this 11 consisted almost entirely of Irish Members, who regarded it as unsatisfactory, and because they who understood the question believed that the Bill would not "close and seal it up for ever."

Their opinion was not heeded, their advice was rejected, the smallness of their vote was ridiculed; and the House of Lords, true to its mission, still further maimed and restricted the already wholly inadequate measure.

What happened? As plainly foretold by them, the Land Act of 1870 worked little benefit to the Irish occupier. Evictions actually increased! In the three years before its passing, the ejectments on notice to quit were 4,253; in the three subsequent years, they reached 5,641, showing an increase of 1,388. In the next three years they were 8,439! These figures represent only the capricious evictions, and do not include ejectment for non-payment of rent or non-title. While

it recognized the grievous wrong done to the victim of a capricious eviction, the Act left full power to perpetrate what it thus admitted to be unjust. It still left the tenant at the mercy of the cupidity, the malice, or the whim of his landlord. Instead of giving security of tenure, it gave the County Court Judge, at his discretion, the power of imposing on the evicting landlord a limited pecuniary fine. In other words, as has been well said, it gave the homeless, and perhaps penniless tenant, "the right to a law-suit." While it carefully fixed a maximum on the amount of compensation which could be awarded to a tenant for disturbance by the landlord, it left to the judge—too often a landlord himself—an absolute discretion as to what amount under that limit he might choose to award. As the result, a different standard of compensation was set up in every County Court—each chairman necessarily availing of the discretion allowed him, and administering the Act in accordance with his peculiar training or prejudices. Thus Mr. De Moleyns, Chairman of Kilkenny, in his evidence before the Bessborough Royal Commission of 1880 (to inquire into the working of the Act), stated that he had never given the maximum compensation which sec. 3 permitted; while Mr. Ferguson, Chairman of the West Riding, Cork, said not only had he frequently done so, but in many cases he had thought it too little, and would have increased the amount if he had the power. Moreover, Mr. Ferguson declared that cases had come before him where he had been thus hampered by the law, in which he knew that notwithstanding the money penalty which the Act empowered him to inflict on the landlord, the latter would actually make a profit out of the transaction, and receive as a fine for the vacant farm considerably more than the

amount awarded to the evicted tenant. Small wonder then that an agitation arose later on to make the greed of the "landgrabber" odious.

The fatal imperfection in the Act of 1870, however, was that, in the vital matter of rack-renting, it provided no remedy. Landlords could still continue to rob their tenantry as freely as before. That "silent system" of rent-raising, which has choked the Irish Court of Bankruptcy with tenant-farmers, could flourish as malignantly as ever. It afforded no protection when a grasping proprietor demanded an increase under a threat of eviction. Before the farmer could derive any benefit from the "protective" clauses of the Act, he must have left his holding for ever. And to the struggling tenant who for long years had been paying a rack-rent, the protection was a mockery. The impossible rent broke him down, and the fact that he was evicted for non-payment of it, alone excluded any claim for compensation for disturbance, while the paltry sum which might be awarded him for improvements was but a poor viaticum to face the world upon. Non-payment of one year's rent defeated the right to compensation for disturbance, though under the scale provided in sec. 3, compensation amounting to several years' rent might otherwise be awarded. In estimating the compensation for improvements made before the passing of the Act, the judge is directed (sec. 4) to "take into consideration the time during which such tenant may have enjoyed the advantages of such improvement . . . in reduction of the claim of the tenant." This clause contains a principle which, when the State is considering how much the landlords should themselves get on being "disturbed," may prove somewhat awkward for them.

The machinery of the County Court, which the tenant was obliged to invoke against his landlord, naturally came more readily to the hand of the educated and monied landlord than to that of the unlettered and possibly bankrupt tenant. The County Court Judges, whose decisions sealed the peasant's fate, are not drawn from the tenants' class, but from that of their oppressors. From the prejudices of that class these judges are not always able to free themselves, and law is not a cheap commodity for the farmer to indulge in, if he wishes to impugn their decisions. Every practising barrister or solicitor can instance decisions showing a most unfair bias towards the landlord on the part of County Court Judges.

Knowing the urgency of the land question for their country, the Irish Members, accepting no rebuff, kept pressing upon the legislature every year since 1870 the necessity for action. The question was constantly raised by Bill, by Resolution, by motions for Commissions, Select Committees, inquiry into working of Land Act, etc., but all to no purpose.

The table on opposite page shows the constant rejection of Land Bills, thirty-one in all, during the ten years from the passing of the Act of 1870 to the introduction of Mr. Gladstone's second measure in 1881.

It is remarkable to notice, though it is not remarkable in itself, that a Land Bill is scarcely ever introduced in the landlord chamber by any member of the Upper House. The landlords make no sign and originate no proposals.

Date.	Bill.	Introduced by	Fate
1871	Landed Property Act, 1847, Amendment,	Sergt. Sherlock,	Withdrawn.
1872	Ulster Tenant Right,	Mr. Butt,	Dropped.
1873	Ulster Tenant Right,	Mr. Butt,	Dropped.
,,	Land Act, 1870, Amendment,	Mr. Butt,	Dropped.
,,	Land Act, 1870, Amndmt. No. 2,	Mr. Heron,	Dropped.
1874	Land Act, 1870, Amndmt.	Mr. Butt,	Dropped.
,,	Land Act, 1870, Amndmt. No. 2,	Sir J. Gray,	Dropped.
,,	Ulster Tenant Right,	Mr. Butt,	Dropped.
,,	Irish Land Act Extension,	The O'Donoghue,	Dropped.
1875	Landed Proprietors',	Mr. Smyth,	Dropped.
,,	Land Act, 1870, Amendment,	Mr. Crawford,	Rejected.
1876	Land Act, 1870, Amendment,	Mr. Crawford,	Withdrawn.
,,	Tenant Right on Expiration of Leases,	Mr. Mulholland,	Dropped.
,,	Land Tenure, Ireland,	Mr. Butt,	Rejected.
1877	Land Tenure, Ireland,	Mr. Butt,	Rejected.
,,	Land Act, 1870, Amendment,	Mr. Crawford,	Withdrawn.
1878	Land Act, 1870, Amendment,	Mr. Herbert,	Dropped.
,,	Tenant Right,	Lord A. Hill,	Rjetd Lords.
,,	Tenant Right, Ulster,	Mr. Macartney,	Withdrawn.
,,	Tenants' Improvements,	Mr. Martin,	Rejected.
,,	Tenants' Protection,	Mr. Moore,	Dropped.
1879	Ulster Tenant Right,	Mr. Macartney,	Rejeted.
,,	Ulster Tenant Right, No. 2,	Lord A. Hill,	Withdrawn.
,,	Landlord and Tenant,	Mr. Herbert,	Dropped.
,,	Land Act, 1870, Amendment,	Mr. Taylor,	Dropped.
,,	Land Act, 1870, Amndmt. No. 2,	Mr. Downing,	Rejected.
1880	1st Sess. Land Act, 1870, Amendment,	Mr. Taylor,	Dropped.
,,	1st Sess. Ulster Tenant Right,	Mr. Macartney,	Dropped.
,,	2nd Sess. Fixity of Tenure,	Mr. Litton,	Rejected.
,,	2nd Sess. Land Act, 1870, Amndmt,	Mr. O'C. Power,	Dropped.
,,	2nd Sess. Compensation for Disturbance,	Mr. W. E. Forster	Rjetd Lords.

For a few years after 1870, owing to the prosperous state of British trade, Irish produce fetched a high price, rent rose, and land acquired almost a fictitious value. Trade then declined, and America poured in a supply of all that class of produce upon which the farmer relies to pay his rent. A bad season occurred in 1877; another followed in 1878; that of 1879 was still worse. In 1879, the potato crop, the chief sustenance of the Irish people, was almost a total failure. The official estimate of the crop (*Thom's Directory*, 1881, p. 687), was:—

1876,	4,154,784	tons	(@ 60s. per ton)	£12,464,382
1877,	1,757,274	,,	,, ,,	5,271,822
1878,	2,526,504	;,	,, ,,	7,579,512
1879,	1,113,676	,,	,, ,,	3,341,028

In proportion to the badness of the harvest, the number of evictions increased. In 1876 they were 1,269; in 1877, 1,323; in 1878, 1,749; and in 1879, 2,667. Added to the failure of the potato, there came upon the cottier of Connaught another calamity. The rent for the patch he tills is annually brought over in wages from England, and this resource was also cut off by the scarcity of employment, caused by the bad state of English trade. In a paper read by Dr. Hancock, the Irish official statistician, before the Statistical Society, in February, 1880, he estimated the losses of the Connaught harvest-men in 1879, from the failure of English wages alone, at £250,000.

During the autumn of 1879 the landlords treated the distress as a pretence got up by dishonest peasants unwilling to fulfil their contracts. If anyone will turn to the Irish correspondence of *The Times* for that period, he will find the utter scorn with which the

chief instructor of the British public on Irish affairs scoffs at the idea that there had been any serious failure of crops, or that want existed anywhere. All the London papers howled in mockery at the pretence of famine in Ireland, and called out as usual for the stern maintenance of the law. The popular leaders were described as dishonest agitators, organizing a sham cry of distress, in order to defraud the landlords of their rents, while the general body of the population, being notoriously composed of rogues and rapparees, no government worthy of the name could allow itself to be imposed on by their ceaseless professional whine.

A year later, when a Tory as well as a Liberal Parliament had recognized the famine by two Relief Acts, a Seeds Act, and a Disturbance Bill, and Viceregal appeals made subscriptions to Irish distress fashionable, the very same papers opened their columns for "The Irish Famine Fund," and the *Daily Telegraph* had as a standing heading letters from "The distressful country." In the *Telegraph* of the 14th November, 1880, its special correspondent wrote of the state of Mayo :—"The cabins of the peasantry seemed to be about the very worst dwellings for human beings I had ever viewed. I noted that many of the cottages I passed boasted no windows, that they all had mud floors, and most of them mud walls; that many were insufficiently thatched; nearly all were shared by the family pig, as well as by the family children; that in the majority of cases a very slough of mud faced the door, and that the utmost misery of appearance characterized every dwelling. I have been in many lands, and have seen many so-called oppressed people at home, but I declare that neither in the Russian steppes, nor in the most neglected

Bulgarian villages, still less in the very poorest Hindoo hamlets, have I ever seen such squalid kraals as the farmers of this part of Mayo inhabit. Here they are not hidden away from public view, but front the high road —a dreadful testimony to mismanagement and uncleanliness, such as can be met with nowhere else. An officer of one of her Majesty's regiments, who lately served with honour in Zululand, declared to me that not even in the worst parts of Cetewayo's dominions did he come across anything so bad as here ; and I am inclined to believe that he was not exaggerating in the slightest."

Writing of the rents of Western tenants, the same gentleman said :—"Their rents seem immoderately high, taking the Poor-law valuation as a standard. John Grady, for example, occupies land valued at £3 10s. and pays £9 ; while Tom Ball has a still smaller holding rated at 30s., for which he pays £5 and taxes. It is manifestly impossible that these men can make a living off poor land so heavily burdened—land brought under cultivation by themselves or their predecessors, without the owner stirring a finger or investing a sixpence in its improvement. The rent, in point of fact, has to be made up by labour in England, and it is just this state of things which should be borne in mind by people who are disposed to complain of the Irish tenant's revolt. His life is often one of slavery, for the benefit of the men who own the soil of a country where agriculture is the only industry."

In the vivid report officially addressed to the Dublin Mansion House Relief Committee, on the condition of the North Mayo peasantry in 1880, pp. 11-13, and 34-35 Mr. J. A. Fox says :—"I have taken the precaution of seeing with my own eyes many of the recipients of relief in their miserable hovels, which

so far as I have yet observed are a shocking reproach to the civilization of the nineteenth century. . . . I do not believe that tongue, or pen, however eloquent, could truly depict the awful destitution of some of those hovels. The children are often nearly naked. Bedding there is none, everything of that kind having long since gone to the pawn-office, as proved to me by numerous tickets placed in my hands for inspection in well nigh every hovel. A layer of old straw, covered by the dirty sacks which conveyed the seed potatoes and artificial manure in the spring, is the sole provision of thousands—with this exception, that little babies sleeping in wooden boxes are occasionally indulged with a bit of thin, old flannel stitched on to the sacking. Men, women, and children sleep under a roof and within walls dripping with wet, while the floor is saturated with damp, not uncommonly oozing out of it in little pools. In one case I asked a gaunt, starved looking man, whom I found literally endeavouring to sleep away the hunger, where his little children slept, when he pointed to a corner in the moist room, in which I could see no sign of bedding. 'Do they wear their clothes at night?' 'No.' 'How then do they keep warm?' 'There is,' he replied, with the most amazing simplicity and composure, 'a deal of warmth in children,' signifying that they obtained warmth by huddling together like little animals. This occurred at Carrycastle. . . . I invariably found them on the occasion of my visit crouching around the semblance of a fire lighted on the open hearth. And this at midsummer, showing how terribly low must be the vitality amongst them. . . . It was only when I was accompanied by a Catholic priest I could get an insight into the appalling want. Alone, some of the most destitute tried

to screen from me the poverty of their truckle beds, upon which the straw was often so thin that I could touch the bare boards with my hand. These received me with a dull, passive surprise, wondering what might be the object of my curiosity in so wretched a country. And even the priest himself had occasionally to use no little persuasion to overcome this modest feeling, by assuring them that I was present in the capacity of a friend. Everywhere the condition of the children was otherwise dreadful, besides, there being for them nothing but the indian-meal, badly cooked, to live upon, and the parents only too glad if the charitable funds provided the family with half enough even of that. Sometimes there was a miserable cow about the premises—for in every case I am referring to the class of small farmers, mostly residing on three to five acres of land, which in North Mayo is generally found to be reclaimed bog or mountain slope; and this cow was supplying milk, principally *gratis*, to a small number of children other than the owner's, to mix with the indian-meal. Occasionally people appealed privately to my companion on no account to cut off the charitable supplies from the possessor of the cow, seldom worth more than a few pounds, and just then unsaleable in any market, as the animal was the hope of so many little ones. At other times cooked cabbage, without a morsel of condiment save salt, was found where there was no meal, and in some instances one was found mixed with the other. But in numerous cases there was neither milk, meal, nor cabbage, about the premises, and in those I gave some temporary relief, to fill up the interval till the next general distribution of the local committee. Sometimes even charity itself had failed, and the mother of the tender young family was found absent, begging for the loan of some indian-meal from

other recipients of charitable relief—the father being in almost every instance away in England, labouring to make out some provision for the coming winter. Yet in the most destitute cases hardly a word of complaint was uttered on the subject, it being a habit with, if not the nature of, the Mayo peasant submissively to ascribe his lot in times of scarcity as well as plenty to the 'will of Providence.' We visited more than thirty hovels of the poor, principally in the townlands of Culmore and Cashel, in which I beheld scenes of wretchedness and misery wholly indescribable. In some of those hovels evicted families had lately taken refuge, so that the overcrowding added to the other horrors of the situation. In one hovel, in the townland of Cashel, we found a little child three years old—one of a family of six, apparently very ill, with no person more competent to watch it than an idiot sister of eighteen, while the mother was absent begging committee relief, the father being in England; in another an aged mother, also very ill, lying alone and unattended, with nothing to eat save long-cooked indian-meal, which she was unable to swallow; in another, in the townland of Culmore, there were four young children, one of whom was in a desperate condition for want of its natural food—milk—without which it was no longer capable of eating the indian-meal stirabout, or even retaining anything whatever on its stomach."

In the south of Ireland things were little better, and the late General Gordon, the hero of Khartoum, writing from Roche's Hotel, Glengariff, County Cork, in November, 1880 (published in *The Times*) said:—"I must say, from all accounts and from my own observation, that the state of our fellow-countrymen in the parts I have named is worse than that of any people in

the world, let alone Europe. I believe that these people are made as we are—that they are patient beyond belief, loyal, but at the same time broken-spirited and desperate, living on the verge of starvation in places which we would not keep our cattle. The Bulgarians, Anatolians, Chinese, and Indians are better off than many of them are. . . I am not well off, but I would offer Lord [Bantry] or his agent [Mr. J. W. Payne, J.P.] £1,000 if either of them would live one week in one of these poor devil's places, and feed as these people do." (The letter will be found in extenso in *The Life of General Gordon*, by his brother.)

The perennial misery and famines of Ireland are frequently set down to its over-population and to the evil of early marriages. The Census Returns prove that the proportion of the population who are married is smaller in Ireland than in either England or Scotland; that the Irish do not marry at so early an age as the English and Scotch do; and that the percentage of natural increase of population in the ten years ending in 1871 was only half as great in Ireland as in England. The following table is taken from Mr. Joseph T. Pim's *Ireland in* 1880. There is no reason to suppose that the proportions have altered since.

PROPORTION OF POPULATION UNMARRIED AND MARRIED (PERCENTAGE) 1871.

	Unmarried.	Married.	Widowed.
England and Wales, ...	37·22	53·98	8·80
Scotland, ...	43·77	46·78	9·45
Ireland, ...	44·99	44·74	10·27

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION BETWEEN THE AGES OF 15 AND 25 UNMARRIED, 1871.

Ages.	England and Wales.		Scotland.		Ireland.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
15 and under 20 ...	99·44	96·82	99·66	97·82	99·77	98·08
20 „ 25 ...	76·71	65·16	84·16	73·79	91·28	78·12

The *Statesman's Year Book* for 1886 shows that the marriages per 1,000 of population are—in England, 8·1; Scotland, 7·2; and Ireland, 4·8; while the births respectively are, 35·1, 34·7, and 26·4. The same work gives the density of population per square mile in the following European countries :—

Belgium, - -	510	Germany, - -	213
Netherlands, -	338	France, - -	184
G. Britain with Ireland,	300	Switzerland, -	181
Italy, - -	256	Austria, - -	161
		Ireland, ...	151

With all the poverty of Ireland, the percentage of pauperism is much smaller than in England. In 1884, 109,000 persons were relieved in Ireland at a cost £1,202,000; whilst in England and Wales, 779,000 were relieved at a cost of £8,350,000. The proportion of paupers to population stood as follows :—

In 1884 :— England, 1 in 33.3
Ireland, 1 in 47.5

In 1878 (before the distress) :—
England, 1 in 29.3
Ireland, 1 in 67.2

When on the approach of the famine of 1879 timely

relief would have been golden, and kindly sympathy would have calmed and encouraged the suffering people, the chief Irish official of the Government seemed to be possessed by a spirit of infatuated malevolence. In the debate on the distress, on 27th May, 1879, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Mr. Lowther, said :—"He was glad to think that that depression, although undoubted, was neither so prevalent nor so acute as the depression at present existing in other parts of the United Kingdom."—(*Hansard*, SER. III. vol. ccxlvi. p. 1399.) A month before (on 28th April, 1879), the first meeting of the farmers to ask reductions of rent had been held in Irishtown, County Mayo; but it attracted little attention, and no report of the proceedings was published in any of the Irish daily papers. The Irish Members, however, were well apprised of the crisis that was at hand, and Mr. Lowther's jaunty levity appalled every serious person in Ireland. Seeing that hope from the Government was vain, Mr. Parnell, himself a landlord, on the 8th June, 1879 (with Mr. Davitt), appeared for the first time on the agrarian platform, at a meeting at Westport (Mayo). Here Mr. Parnell gave the threatened peasantry, whose desperate situation had been vainly brought before the House of Commons, the famous watchword, "Keep a firm grip of your homesteads,"—for the popular leaders keenly remembered '48, when the starving tenants paid their rents and died.

Mr. Lowther, however, had nothing but jibes, sarcasms, and threats for the hungry people, and he dubbed their assemblies "the anti-rent movement." Replying to an Ulster Tory landlord, as to the steps the Government were taking to punish seditious speakers at these meetings (of which only three

had then been held), he replied, on June 22nd, 1879 :—"With reference to the state of affairs in certain parts of the West of Ireland, brought about by what is known as the anti-rent movement, the Government is fully alive to the necessity of dealing promptly with it. Colonel Bruce, Deputy Inspector-General of Constabulary has been despatched on a special mission to the districts concerned. His duty will be to consult with the resident magistrates and the local constabulary, and report to the Government as to what additional police force and special police stations may be required, to enable full protection to be afforded to all persons in the exercise of their legal rights. Special police protection will be afforded to process-servers or others requiring it. Considerable reinforcements are being drafted into these districts, and it has been notified to the inhabitants that in the event of any attempt at outrage, the cost of these measures will be levied off the neighbourhood in which it occurs."—*Hansard*, SER. III. vol. ccxlvii. p. 433.

On 26th June, 1879, the Irish Secretary, being challenged by the Member for Mayo (Mr. O'Connor Power) as to his sneer at the promoters of one of the meetings—that at Milltown, Mayo—(*Hansard*, SER. III. vol. ccxlvii. p. 194), Mr. Lowther said :—"A great proportion of the speakers were in no respect fairly representative of the tenant farmers of the district. I find, for instance, that the first resolution was moved by a clerk in a commercial house in Dublin, and seconded by a person who is stated to be a discharged schoolmaster. Another resolution was moved by a convict at large on a ticket-of-leave, and seconded by a person who is described as the representative of a local newspaper." This brutal attack on Mr. Davitt and his friends led to a motion

by Mr. Power to adjourn the House, for the purpose of calling attention to the real character of the movement and the distress that prevailed in his constituency. But *Hansard* dryly narrates that "From the time it appeared probable a debate was about to be raised, hon. members ceased to pay attention to the hon. member's remarks, and the conversation became so general and so loud that the hon. member could with difficulty be heard." He was half-a-dozen times interrupted by the Speaker, and by the Tory Members, including the leader of the House, Sir S. Northcote. A disgraceful scene ensued, and for merely remarking in protest against interruptions—"Until the highest authority in this House commands me to be silent, I shall not be silent until I have made my speech," Mr. Speaker told him "he was not entitled to use language of menace to this House," and that he should be "more measured in his language." So unfair did these proceedings appear to Mr. John Bright, that he thus alluded to the Chief Secretary's conduct:—"I think Irish Members have good reason to complain, and frequently to complain, of the manner and tone, and sometimes even of the language of the answers of the right hon. gentleman. When the hon. member for Mayo rose for the purpose of making an explanation, and said that the answer of the right hon. gentleman was absolutely inaccurate, what was he met with? Not with the slightest patience from hon. members opposite. Immediately arose—on purpose obviously—a hum and buzz of conversation from this end of the House and that, and the object was to drown the voice of the hon. member for Mayo, and to make it impossible he should give any answer to the statements of the Chief Secretary. This conduct, of refusing to

hear in a case of this kind, when an hon. member thinks the conduct and character of his constituents are attacked by the Chief Secretary for Ireland—this conduct which was pursued by hon. gentlemen opposite was exactly that which led, and which necessarily led, to the unpleasantness which has occurred."

The indifference of the House of Commons and Mr. Lowther's callous levity were met in Ireland by a spirit of resolute defiance. Meetings multiplied; and on the 21st October, 1879, as a protest against the heartless neglect of the Government and a shield to the menaced people, the organization known as the Irish National Land League was founded in Dublin, with Mr. Parnell as its president. "Vigour" and "firmness" were now demanded by the landlords, and in two or three weeks Mr. Davitt, Mr. Brennan, and others, were arrested on a charge of sedition. Absolute starvation and famine-fever had set in in Connaught; but if the real state of affairs had been admitted by the Tory administration, it would have been to justify the agitation and to have "betrayed" the landlords who were resisting the demands for a reduction of rent. Evictions were carried out by immense bodies of police; but the starving women at Carraroe and elsewhere bared their bosoms to the bayonets. Hunger defied "the majesty of the law," and Dublin Castle showed serious signs of alarm.

In December, 1879, Mr. Parnell and Mr. Dillon set out on a mission to America, where on 1st January, 1880, they landed, and in two months sent home £70,000 to the Land League, of which £50,000 was distributed in charity. The incoming Lord Mayor of Dublin, Mr. Gray, M.P., started a fund in the Mansion House, which in the course of the year distributed £181,000

(largely Australian) for food and seed. The *New York Herald* alone raised £50,000; the Canadian Government sent a large grant, and at length the "Castle" itself was driven to make official acknowledgment of the famine which its mouthpieces so long denied. This took the shape of a letter from the Duchess of Marlborough, the wife of the Lord Lieutenant, appealing for help in *The Times* (which resulted in £135,000 being administered in charity from Dublin Castle); and then the Government, when Parliament met two months later, was moved to pass a comical Relief Act, which resulted in the Irish landlords being allowed to borrow out of the Irish Church Surplus £1,100,000. This money was lent without interest for two years, and afterwards bore only one per cent., and was ostensibly granted to enable employment to be given by the proprietors in improving their estates. The measure of course was a flagrant job, and brought little benefit to any deserving person, while the most serious allegations have been made as to the manner in which the bulk of the money was spent.

On the introduction of this "Relief" Bill, the Irish Members besought the Government to recognize that the only permanent cure for these recurring famines was an amendment of the land laws. To their appeals Mr. Lowther cheerily replied on 6th February, 1880: —"The hon. member for Cork (Mr. Shaw) spoke of the extension to the whole of Ireland of what is commonly known as the Ulster tenant custom, and he says that on a former occasion I spoke of that suggestion of his as pure, undiluted communism. That, sir, is a statement I did make, and which I am quite ready to repeat now. . . . Much has been said of the present state of the land laws, but I have no hesitation in saying

that they have nothing to do with the present state of Ireland." To no man more than the Right Hon. James Lowther should the title "Father of the Land League" be given.

The dissolution of 1880 brought Mr. Parnell back from America, and on 21st March he landed at Queenstown. After a surprising series of victories at the polls, he was chosen by the newly elected Irish Members Leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, at their first meeting, on 17th May, 1880. On the 20th May Parliament met under Mr. Gladstone's second administration; but the Government announced no measure to deal with the distress (then at its worst) or with the Land Question. After some pressure, however, a Relief Act was passed, and the Compensation for Disturbance Bill was carried through the Lower House. This Bill was only to remain in force until 1881, and applied merely to the districts scheduled as "distressed" under the Relief Act. It simply provided a temporary remedy for one of the glaring defects of the Land Act of 1870, referred to on page 111. Tenants in the distress-scheduled area, who could prove to the County Court, on being evicted for non-payment of rent, that such non-payment was due to then existing distress, were to be allowed compensation for improvements and disturbance, provided the value of these, as estimated by the court, exceeded the amount of rent owing. In other words, the tenant's saleable good-will was not to be entirely confiscated by unpunctuality in paying a year's rent. This provision, which was adopted by the Government from the Bill of the Irish Party, would have almost entirely stopped eviction during the continuance of the distress; and although obviously founded both on justice and policy, it was rejected

in the House of Lords by a vote of 282 to 51. Their lordships a few days before also threw out the Limitation of Costs (Ireland) Bill, sent up by the Commons, which would have lessened the tenants' costs in ejectment. A third feat of the hereditary chamber in the session of 1880, was to reject a Bill to assimilate the Irish law as to the registration of voters to that in force in England

At the close of the session of 1880, so desperate was the condition of the people of the West, that on 13th August the House of Commons unanimously agreed to Mr. Power's resolution :—"That in the opinion of this House, the present condition of the agricultural population in Mayo, Sligo, Galway, and other parts of the West of Ireland, demands the serious and immediate attention of Her Majesty's Government."

Ireland had up to this remained in a state of such profound peace, in spite of the distress which prevailed, that the Government declined to renew, as being unnecessary, the Coercion Act which expired in June, 1880, and which had been in force for seven or eight years previously.

High hopes had been raised in the hearts of many poor tenants by the introduction of the Disturbance Bill; and its rejection threw the country into a ferment. The Government failed to give any sort of reassuring pledge to the sorely harassed peasants, who were left to face a dreary winter unprotected from a law, which the Chief-Secretary himself, Mr. W. E. Forster, admitted must "oblige him to administer injustice." That gentleman simply allowed the House of Commons, to be prorogued, and went away on his holidays, leaving Ireland to feast off the barren resolution of August 13. His last act, before the recess, was to refuse to place a

representative of the tenants on the Royal Commission of Enquiry into the Land Act of 1870, which was appointed to consider the agrarian situation. It seems now almost incredible, that he should have been able to induce the Government to constitute this Commission of four landlords and a judge—two of the former, The O'Conor Don and Mr. Kavanagh—being defeated candidates at the then recent elections, the third, Lord Bessboro', being an unpopular peer, and the fourth, Mr. William Shaw, (since a bankrupt and ex-M.P.), being the defeated opponent of Mr. Parnell for the leadership of the Irish Party. The judge, Baron Dowse, was the most valuable and popular member of the Commission. The Government were warned of the impression that would get abroad, respecting their *bona fides* of intention really to grapple with the land question, and Mr. Justin McCarthy proposed a motion of dissatisfaction in the House of Commons on the composition of the Commission; but it was defeated, and no heed, as usual, was paid to the representations of Irish Members. The Land League, therefore, by special resolution, refused to recognize or give evidence before this Commission; but, misled by its whitewashing report, Mr. Gladstone, in introducing the Land Act of 1881, stated (7th April, 1881) that "the landlords of Ireland had stood their trial, and as a rule they had been acquitted."

It is not too much to say that Mr. Forster's Irish secretaryship proved as great a misfortune for the Liberal party as that of Mr. Lowther for the Tories. His Commission of Enquiry was ordered to sit in secret, and there being no kind of hope held out for the safety of the tenants whom the Disturbance Bill was to have protected, the agitation proceeded more fiercely than before. In December, 1880, he caused Mr. Parnell

and a number of his colleagues to be arraigned in the Queen's Bench on a charge of "conspiracy to impoverish landlords," and when this failed, Parliament was summoned on 6th January, 1881, to suspend the Habeas Corpus. One thousand men were arrested by him in 1881-'2, including Mr. Parnell, several Members of Parliament, priests, solicitors, barristers, mayors, town-councillors, and poor-law guardians. Many ladies were also imprisoned on the most frivolous charges under an Act (the 34th of Edward III.), passed A.D. 1360, and the fury of the people against the Government became such, that there was little recognition of Mr. Gladstone's second great measure of land reform, which received the Royal assent on 22nd August, 1881. The consequence was, that Mr. Forster made no attempt to work the new Act in consonance with Irish opinion. Of the seventy or eighty commissioners appointed to fix fair rents, not more than two or three were tenant-farmers. The rest were landlords, agents, and lawyers, most of them in bitter antagonism to popular feeling; and the moment they began to cut down the rents, they were instantly intimidated by the protests of their own class, and by a Committee of Enquiry set on foot by the House of Lords in 1882.

As an instance of the spirit that prevailed, it may be mentioned that Mr. George Fottrell, Solicitor to the Land Commission (now Clerk to the Crown for Dublin) was called on to resign, for publishing a leaflet encouraging the people to use the purchase clauses of the Act, and citing the names of Mr. Parnell and Mr. Davitt as advocates of peasant proprietary. This high-handed proceeding completed the terrorism of the officials. Those who remained took their cue from the

Kilmainham-regime at the Castle; and to clinch the influence of the administration over the Sub-Commissioners, a number were appointed for brief periods, not exceeding a year, so that when the list of quarterly dismissals was conned over by the trembling rent-fixers, they might judge from the character of the disemployed, what line of conduct in themselves was best calculated to secure the continuance of their salaries. A few of them had originally been appointed for longer terms, and whenever these showed any independence they were hunted from pillar to post, their circuits broken up, and themselves "transported" into distant counties, beyond the wrath of the aggrieved landlords, upon whose rack-rents they had been operating. During the most important period connected with the working of the Act the popular leaders were in prison, the Land League was suppressed, Parliament was occupied discussing the *cloture*, and every protest made to Mr. Forster by the unimprisoned remnant of the Irish party was derided and set at naught.

A week after the Act became law, the chief Commissioners themselves struck a heavy blow at public confidence, by issuing broadcast a circular purporting to explain the "benefits" of the measure, but in reality directed against its most vital provision—that affecting tenants' improvements. One of the main controversies of the Irish land question for generations, has centred round the claim of the occupiers to legal protection for their improvements, and the fiercest portion of the battle had been waged to secure this; but now that Parliament appeared at last to have recognized the tenants' rights in this respect, they read with dismay of the interpretation which the Land Commissioners

put upon the provision which dealt with improvements. Sub-section 9, section 8 (known as the Healy Clause), provides that "no rent shall be allowed or made payable in any proceedings under this Act, in respect of improvements made by the tenant or his predecessors in title, and for which, in the opinion of the court, the tenant or his predecessors in title shall not have been paid or otherwise compensated by the landlord or his predecessors in title."

Nothing seemed plainer to the public than this. Lord Lifford, in objecting to the clause in the House of Lords, declared that "its effect went back to Adam;" but the Land Commissioners, by their circular (officially communicated to the *Freeman's Journal*, 1st September, 1881), alleged it meant that "no tenant can have his rent *increased* by reason of any improvements he or his predecessors may have made." The Commission consisted of a landlord, an agent, and a judge, and this interpretation was denounced on the spot by the popular leaders, for what they charged to be an inexcusable perversion of the statute. Resentment was bitterer because the Commissioner who was believed to be responsible for the wording of the circular (Mr. Litton) had been a member of the House of Commons during the entire progress of the measure, and was therefore supposed to be fully acquainted with the intentions of Parliament. It was during the controversy thus provoked as to the real meaning of the "Healy Clause," that Mr. Parnell, in Tyrone, put forward the doctrine of "prairie value," as the one which logically sprang from its effective interpretation; and in this he founded himself on a declaration of Mr. John Bright's (upon the second reading of the Act) that if the land of Ireland were stripped of the improvements made upon it

by the labour of the occupier, the face of the country "would be as bare and naked as an American prairie."

Rooted as was the mistrust implanted in the popular mind by the unhappy circular of the Land Commissioners, the judgment of the ultimate tribunal on the interpretation of the disputed clause completed the mischief. The tenants regarded as their sheet-anchor the provision which protected their improvements from the imposition of rent; but when the decision of the Court of Appeal was made known, it finally shattered what lurking remains of faith they had in the tribunals to which the Act compelled them to resort. It had not been law six months before the Lords-Justices of Appeal, in the famous case of Adams *v.* Dunseath, held—1st, that "enjoyment" of improvements made before the Land Act of 1870, was a "compensation" for them, *i.e.*, that they practically became the landlord's by process of time; 2nd, that the improvability of the soil belongs to the landlord; and, 3rd, that the improvements, to come within the protection of the Act, must be "suitable to the holding," *i.e.*, that if the tenant built thereon a corn-mill or a mansion he might be rack-rented for these "unsuitable" structures without mercy.

This decision transferred millions worth of the occupiers' property back into the landlords' pockets, from which it was believed Parliament had rescued it. The late Lord Chancellor, Mr. Law, who presided over the court, dissented generally from its findings. He had been Attorney-General in the House of Commons in the previous year during the passage of the measure, and it owed much to his zealous ability and upright regard for the rights of the cultivator. But he must have mournfully reflected that on the chief point on which

he differed from the majority of the court (as to "enjoyment" constituting "compensation"), the Government vehemently refused, as superfluous, an amendment of Mr. Parnell, which would have prevented the very mischief that occurred. Three times the question was raised on the Bill, and Mr. Gladstone's words on each occasion (*Hansard*, SER. III. vol. cclxiv. pp. 1393, 1489, and 1975) were :—

On August 9th :—"I am obliged to decline the proposed addition of the words of the hon. member for the City of Cork (Mr. Parnell) on this ground. In the Act of 1870 we did in respect to the tenant recognize the principle, that he might be compensated by a reasonable lapse of time in respect of improvements he had made. . . . We do not recognize that principle in the present Act. . . . It is much better that those who make the improvements should have the whole benefit of the improvements."

On August 10th :—"The doctrine accepted at the time of the Land Act of 1870, and which he certainly declined to accept the night before, was the doctrine, that the enjoyment by the tenant for a certain time of his own improvements might have reimbursed him for the cost of these improvements, and by a natural process they passed over to the landlord. . . . The tenant's improvements were the tenant's own property, and he would not admit the principle that the time during which he enjoyed those was any reason for their passing away from him."

On August 15th :—"It was nothing short of impossible that the court should imagine or adjudge that to be compensation by the landlord which had never cost the landlord in any shape, in money or money's worth

a single farthing. Consequently the Government could not accede to the amendment."

One of the curiosities of the decision in Adams *v.* Dunseath was that:—"Three members of the court dissented from the decision come to [on one point], and three of the majority of four judges whose judgments prevailed, based their decision on a construction of the phrase 'predecessors in title,' which the majority of the court, in deciding another point, declared to be incorrect; while the fourth judge, whose voice turned the scale on this question, based his decision on a view of the law which three other members of the court had previously dissented from." (Healy's *Land Act*, p. xix.)

Although the confiscation of the tenants' improvements, which resulted from this judgment, was contrary to the declared intentions of Mr. Gladstone, the Government, with the terror of the House of Lords before their minds, while admitting the injustice, have never been able to accept the Bills brought in by the Irish party to remedy it. As a rule, the reductions given under the Act average twenty per cent., much less than has been voluntarily given in England by thousands of landlords (see evidence of Sir James Caird before Royal Commission into Depression of Trade, Blue Book for 1886); although in that country all the improvements are not made, as in Ireland, by the occupier. Still the effect of the judgments in the Land Courts is, that the pharasaical girders at a dishonest peasantry—noble lords and gentlemen of high degree—have been judicially found guilty of that "felonious conduct," which Lord Clarendon, an ex-Irish Viceroy, charged them with (see p. 103-4). Each of the 150,000 tenants whose rent has been reduced holds a certificate from a legal tribu-

nal, of the injustice of his landlord. As soon as the Act passed, many owners, to avoid the exposure of the court, at once gave permanent abatements. The following are a few of those who figure in *Eason's Almanac* for 1883 (p. 179) as having "consented" to reductions out of court :—

Landlord.			County.		Percentage of reduction.
Annesley,	Lord	-	Cavan,	-	14.8
Arran,	,,	-	Donegal,	-	22.2
Belmore,	,,	-	Tyrone,	-	12.7
Carew,	,,	-	Waterford,	-	16.3
Courtown,	,,	-	Carlow,	-	22.8
Dartrey,	,,	-	Waterford,	-	16.7
De Clifford,	,,	-	Mayo,	-	14.2
Downshire,	Marquis of	-	Down,	-	16.2
Dunally,	Lord	-	Tipperary,	-	24.4
Ely,	,,	-	Fermanagh,	-	20.2
Erne,	,,	-	Mayo,	-	14.0
Farnham,	,,	-	Cavan,	-	15.3
Fitzwilliam,	,,	-	Wicklow,	-	15.3
Fortescue,	,,	-	Waterford,	-	16.9
Gough,	,,	-	Galway,	-	17.3
Langford,	,,	-	Dublin,	-	18.7
Leinster,	Duke of	-	Kildare,	-	16.6
Londonderry, Lord and Marlborough, Duke of		-	Antrim,	-	13.5
Lurgan,	Lord	-	Armagh,	-	23.6
O'Neill,	,,	-	Antrim,	-	12.9
Ormathwaite,	,,	-	Cork,	-	21.2
Powerscourt,	,,	-	Wicklow,	-	21.5
Skinners Company,		-	Derry,	-	11.4
Sligo,	Lord	-	Mayo,	-	16.5
Templemore,	,,	-	Donegal,	-	15.8
Ventry,	,,	-	Kerry,	-	13.0
Waterford,	,,	-	Waterford,	-	16.7

Why the abatements (if just) were not given before the gentle pressure of the statute law came to be applied, no noble lord has risen to explain.

The following landlords are amongst those given in *Eason* as having fought their tenants in court :—

Landlord.	County.	Average per cent. Reduction awarded by Court.
Abercorn, Duke of	Tyrone,	11.8
Annally, Lord	Longford,	23.5
Arran, „	Donegal,	30.2
Ashbrook, „	Queen's Co.	36.6
Bandon, „	Cork,	14.5
Bantry, „	Cork,	14.1
Bruce, Sir H.	Derry,	22.7
Clanricarde, „	Galway,	10.8
Courtown, „	Wexford,	13.3
Deremore, „	Down,	13.6
Donoughmore, „	Tipperary,	16.3
Egmont „	Cork,	28.0
Gormanston, „	Meath,	26.1
Gosford, „	Armagh,	23.2
Hawarden, „	Tipperary,	16.9
Huntingdon, „	Waterford,	21.0
Inchiquin, „	Clare,	15.1
Jones, Bence, J.P.	Cork,	32.3
Kenmare, Lord	Kerry,	13.6
Leinster, Duke of	Kildare,	17.1
Leconfield, Lord	Limerick,	19.0
Londonderry, „	Fermanagh,	8.8
Massareene, „	Antrim,	17.8
Massey, „	Dublin,	16.0
Normanton, „	Tipperary,	15.3
Wallscourt, „	Galway,	21.2

It must not be supposed, however, that reductions thus given were in all cases final. Appeals are the commonest method of oppression resorted to by wealthy landlords, and the costs awarded to a successful suitor by the Land Commissioners have been conveniently fixed, so that the landlords, who are most commonly the appellants, risk little by listing appeals, and the dread of further litigation frequently reduces a tenant to "reason." Where all fails, the landlord frequently imposes a rent on the bogs (required for fuel) equal to the reduction obtained in the Land Court. Well might the Marquis of Hartington say at Accrington (1st December, 1883) :—

"Lawless agitation was brought prominently forward, but had there been nothing in Ireland in the past two or three years but lawless agitation? Were there no grievances, no confiscation of the tenants' improvements, no evictions for impossible rents? Was there no general opinion, not only amongst the disaffected as well as the most respectable classes in Ireland, that judicial interference in some shape was required to settle the relations between the landlords and tenants? The evidence of this opinion did not rest only on the report of Lord Bessborough's Commission, but on the report of the Agricultural Commission, the Duke of Richmond's Commission, and on the opinion of almost every person entitled to speak with authority on the affairs of Ireland."

The manner in which rack-renting went on in the West of Ireland, where the tenants mostly live by working as harvesters during the summer in England, will be seen from the following table. It gives a few samples of the reductions enforced by the Sub-Commissioners in the Island of Achill, where in 1886 distress again became so keen, that a new Relief Act had to be passed, and where nearly every peasant man, woman, and child has this year been saved from hunger by American charity, and from nakedness by a clothing committee of charitable Dublin ladies. Economists tell these people they could not exist were they rent free, and therefore they were probably supposed to be indifferent to the mere details of extortion, which after all made only a difference of 200 or 300 per cent. in their payments. The figures are taken from the Blue Book C. 3827, p. 145 to 152, for July, 1883, and represent reductions on the estate of two proprietors, who own nearly the whole island.

Estate of the Achill Protestant Mission to Catholics.

Govt. Valuation (for rating).		Old Rent.		Fair Rent.
£ s. d.		£ s. d.		£ s. d.
2 10 0	-	5 0 0	-	2 5 0
16 0 0	-	20 0 0	-	13 0 0
3 10 0	-	5 0 0	-	2 15 0
0 11 0	-	2 0 0	-	1 0 0
1 0 0	-	3 0 0	-	1 12 0
1 5 0	-	3 0 0	-	1 8 0
1 13 0	-	5 0 0	-	2 5 0
0 11 0	-	2 0 0	-	1 0 0
1 10 0	-	3 0 0	-	1 10 0
nil.	-	2 0 0	-	1 0 0
1 2 0	-	2 5 0	-	0 16 0
3 0 0	-	4 0 0	-	2 5 0
2 0 0	-	3 0 0	-	1 8 0
12 1 0	-	12 0 0	-	8 8 0
1 10 0	-	4 5 0	-	1 17 6
0 9 8	-	2 4 0	-	0 15 0
0 8 0	-	2 4 0	-	0 16 0
0 8 0	-	2 2 0	-	0 17 0

Estate of Richard Pike.

2 0 0	-	4 15 0	-	1 16 0
1 15 0	-	4 17 0	-	2 0 0
0 10 0	-	2 6 0	-	1 0 0
1 5 0	-	4 5 0	-	2 0 0
1 10 0	-	4 5 0	-	1 15 0
0 15 0	-	2 8 0	-	1 4 0
0 15 0	-	4 1 0	-	1 12 6
0 8 0	-	2 3 0	-	1 2 0
0 8 0	-	3 5 0	-	1 6 0
0 8 0	-	2 2 0	-	0 16 0
0 8 0	-	2 2 0	-	1 1 0
0 8 0	-	2 2 0	-	0 16 6
0 8 0	-	2 2 0	-	1 1 0
0 12 0	-	2 5 0	-	1 2 0
1 10 0	-	4 5 0	-	1 17 6
0 9 8	-	2 4 0	-	0 15 0
1 8 0	-	2 14 0	-	1 10 0
0 10 0	-	2 10 0	-	1 4 6
0 8 0	-	2 4 0	-	0 16 0
0 8 0	-	2 2 0	-	0 17 0
nil.	-	2 12 0	-	1 1 0
0 9 0	-	2 13 0	-	0 18 0
0 11 0	-	2 15 0	-	1 4 0

Many of the wretched cottiers of Achill, who were too poor to fee lawyers to conduct their cases before the Sub-Commissioners, were forced to surrender their "fair rents," and pay a higher amount, in consequence of a threat by the landlord to appeal and subject them to further law costs, which they could not pay. On the 20th November, 1885, the special correspondent of the *Freeman's Journal* (Mr. Michael MacDonough), who visited the island to report on the distress, stated that in some places the natives, who use seaweed for manure, "brought huge stones from the mountain tops down to the seashore, in several cases many miles distant, and thence transported them in boats a long way out to sea, where they were deposited. In course of time the stones become covered with sea-weed, and the crop thus produced is collected by the tenants every year. These stones are called 'carrigeens,' and on some of the properties of the island a yearly rate is charged for their use, although it cannot be denied—nor is it attempted to be denied—by the landlords, that the tenants alone underwent the trouble and expense of putting them in position."

Had the Land Act of 1881 been honestly administered, and worked in the spirit which animated its great author, it would have gone far to appease the agrarian difficulty in this generation. The exclusion of 120,000 lease-holders from its benefits, however, would, in any case, have kept the sore open, even if the Land Commissioners had not shown themselves determined to keep the question alive by farcical reductions. Sir James Caird (*The Times*, 20th March, 1886) shows the chief reason for the failure of the Act :—

"The land in Ireland is held by two distinct classes of tenants—the small farmers who pay rent from £1 to

£20, and the comparatively large farmers who pay rent from £20 upwards. Of the first class there are 538,000 holdings, averaging £6 each; of the second class, 121,000 holdings, averaging £56 each. The rent payable by the first class is £3,572,000, and by the second class £6,845,000. Five-sixths of the Irish tenants thus pay about one-third of the total rental, and one-sixth pay nearly two-thirds. . . . If the present price of agricultural produce continue, I should fear that from the land held by the large body of poor farmers in Ireland any economical rent has for the present disappeared."

Upon this *The Times*, after describing Sir James Caird as a man "whose authority on agricultural questions is universally recognized," declared:—"It is not too much to say that the rental of the 538,000 holdings is practically irrecoverable by anybody, whether landlord, English Government, or Irish Government."

Whereupon the *Pall Mall Gazette* exclaimed:—"Nothing that Mr. Parnell in his worst moments ever said approaches in gravity to this momentous declaration. For the doctrine of no rent for holders under £20 is now formally advanced on the authority of the leading English economist and endorsed by the chief advocates of the Irish landlords. Here is 'prairie value' with a vengeance. . . . The conclusions of the Land League are now endorsed—as far as five-sixths of the Irish holdings go—by Sir James Caird and *The Times*."

The Blue Books prove that the reductions given by the County Court Judges are two or three per cent. higher than those of the Sub-Commissioners, yet it was in the County Courts the Land Act of 1870 was nullified; and on this account, when, on the introduction of the Act of 1881, it was seen that the Government proposed solely to entrust to the same tribunals the power

of fixing the rents, so great was the outcry that Sub-Commissioners were called into existence, with leave to the litigant to proceed before either tribunal. Yet these County Court Judges, being independent in their positions, gave greater reductions than the "impartial" Sub-Commissioners; and so notorious did this become that the Chief Commissioners calmly promulgated a rule, enabling landlords, wherever a tenant listed his case in the County Court, to apply to them to transfer it to the Sub-Commissioners. As the fair rent dates from the gale-day after it is fixed, the delay occasioned by this rule, at a time when the Sub-Commissions were blocked with business, assisted the landlords to enforce their rack-rents for a longer period, and it was not until attention was called to the operation of the rule in this respect, by a question in Parliament, that it was modified. To obtain redress under the Act, an unlettered and impoverished tenantry have had to pit themselves in a legal duel with trained agents, landlords, and valuers, skilled in every technicality, and armed with proofs at all points, from the evidence of battalions of bailiffs, down to the ledgers and letters of the last century. During a *Nisi Prius* suit, reported in the *Freeman's Journal* of 18th January, 1884, Baron Dowse remarked as follows:—"In order to show how business was transacted by Sub-Commissions, he might mention that it was proved before him in a jury trial last sittings, that while the legal Sub-Commissioner, Mr. M'Devitt, had recorded in his book a certain rent as fixed, his registrar had given a certificate that the case had been withdrawn, and nothing at all done in it."

The total cost of working the Act up to the present exceeds the entire sum granted in annual reductions since it became law.

CHAPTER VI.

HOME RULE.

THE framers of the Act of Union in 1800 seemed to have regarded its fifth article as the backbone of the agreement between the English and Irish Parliaments. It recites the establishment of the Protestant Church of Ireland, its unity with the English Church, and provides that "the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the said united church, shall be and shall remain in force *for ever*, as the same are now by law established for the Church of England, and the continuance and preservation of the said united church, as the Established Church of England and Ireland, shall be deemed and taken to be an *essential and fundamental* part of the Union." This fifth article is the only one in which solemn words italicized occur; and therefore, when in 1869 Mr. Gladstone pulled down the church whose establishment was to have remained "for ever" as an "essential and fundamental part of the Union," Irish Episcopalians regarded the treaty as broken and nullified. On 3rd June, 1869, a petition to the House of Lords, from five thousand Orangemen and other Protestants, was adopted at a public meeting in Dublin, convened by the Grand Orange Lodge, which declared that the passing of the Church Bill would be "a violation of the constitution," and that its sanction by Her Majesty would cause her "to forswear her coronation oath." The Grand Lodge met afterwards on the same day, and the Deputy-Grand Secretary, Brother John H. Nunn, gave the following notice:—"That in the event of the

Bill to disestablish and disendow the Church of Ireland receiving the royal assent, he will move that the words 'the Legislative Union,' in the statement of the basis of the institution, be expunged therefrom, and consequently that the members of the institution shall not thenceforth be bound, as Orangemen, to maintain that Union."

The Bill having become law, the Grand Lodge met on the 8th December, 1869, and Brother Nunn, in pursuance of notice, moved the following resolution, which was seconded by Brother Arthur H. Foster, D.G.M. :—

"That the statement of the basis of our institution containing the following obligation :—'The institution is composed of Protestants, united and resolved to the utmost of their power to support (amongst other things) the Legislative Union' *(sic)*, and this Grand Lodge having expressed its conviction that the passing of the Irish Church Act was a direct violation of the Act of Union, and adhering to that determination, it is now resolved that the obligation to maintain the Legislative Union should no longer be continued as binding upon the members of the institution, and that the statement contained in the 'basis of the institution,' and all provision in the rules and rituals, and other forms of the institution, imposing or recognizing such obligation be expunged therefrom."

This resolution was not carried, and therefore Brother Nunn resigned; whereupon, as appears from a *Report of the Proceedings of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland*, printed by Brother James Forrest, Capel-street, Dublin, 1870, he was induced to hold over his resignation on the understanding that a special meeting of the Grand Lodge be called "to consider the subject of omitting the obligation to maintain the Legislative Union."

The loyal spirit of the governing body of the order at the time is proved from the fact, that at the same meeting the election of O'Donovan Rossa as M.P. for Tipperary was considered, and in the proceedings of the Grand Lodge it is recorded that they sanctioned a resolution, passed by the County Monaghan Grand Lodge, and amended it into the following form :— Proposed by the Worshipful Master, and seconded by Brother the Rev. J. Flanagan (the parson who wanted to "kick the Queen's crown into the Boyne") and resolved :—"That although we utterly disclaim any sympathy with the Fenian society or its objects, that the best thanks of this Grand Lodge are due, and hereby given to the gallant gentlemen and Conservative electors of Tipperary, in standing aloof on the recent election, and allowing the Fenians and other opponents of the Government to scout the Government candidate, and assert their right to return the man of their choice, thereby expressing their disgust at the general conduct of their rulers, and the failure of concession to the disloyal of the land in bringing about peace in Ireland." The Tory sheriff of Tipperary at the time made no charge for election expenses to O'Donovan Rossa's victorious supporters.

Having thus established an *entente cordiale* with the Fenians, the special meeting of the Grand Lodge, summoned to consider the Legislative Union, assembled, and by twenty-two votes to eighteen carried the following resolution :—"That all statements and provisions in the objects, rules, and formularies of the Orange Institution, which impose any obligations upon its members to maintain the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland, be expunged therefrom." But as the bye-laws of the society provide that no change can be made

in its constitution except by a two-thirds majority, Lord Enniskillen, the Imperial Grand Master, wrote to the press to say the resolution was *defeated.*

The "forward" section of the brethren, however, were not only ripe for revolt, but keen for an understanding with the Nationalists; and accordingly, on the 19th May, 1870, they mustered in great strength, in response to the following circular, signed by Protestants and Orangemen, to meet a number of the leading Nationalists and Fenians in Dublin :—

[Private and Confidential.]

Bilton Hotel, 17*th May*, 1870.

Dear Sir,

You are requested to attend a Preliminary Meeting of some of the leading Citizens, at The Bilton Hotel, on Thursday evening next, at 8 o'clock, for the purpose of devising *the best plan* (to be laid before her Majesty), for promoting the future interests and welfare of Ireland.

Yours very truly,

James Vokes Mackey, J.P.
Graham Lemon,
W. H. Kerr,
W. Ledger Erson, J.P.
Hon. Secretaries.

N.B.—The Meeting will be strictly private.

When the strange gathering convoked by this secret circular assembled, the Nationalists were in a small minority; but after some hours discussion the following motion, proposed by Isaac Butt, was unanimously carried :—"That it is the opinion of this meeting, that the true remedy for the evils of Ireland is the establishment of an Irish Parliament, with full control over our own domestic affairs." A committee on resolutions was then appointed, on which the Orangemen and Protestants numbered thirty-five, and the Catholics twenty-six (the names and religions will be found in A. M.

Sullivan's *New Ireland*, p. 341). It comprised elements as divergent as the Rt. Hon. Colonel King Harman, M.P., who subsequently became one of the Queen's Privy Council, and Mr. Patrick Egan, who was afterwards honourably distinguished as Treasurer of the Land League of Ireland, and President of the National League of America. At a subsequent meeting of this committee the constitution of the Home Government Association of Ireland was given to the world. This was the birth of the Home Rule movement, and to its initiative we, in the year 1886, owe Mr. Gladstone's "Bill for the Better Government of Ireland."

The Orangemen who now threaten "civil war," if a Home Rule measure passes, are members of the very organization, whose governing body declared that the maintenance of the Union should no longer remain one of its articles of faith. But the resentment of the conditional-loyalists of sixteen years ago having had time to evaporate, they now return to their traditional antagonism to Papists. As, however, it is Orangeism that supplies the motive power of the opposition shown in the north-east corner of Ulster to Mr. Gladstone's proposals, some account of its record in the past may be instructive.

The Orange order was founded in 1795, when George III. recalled the popular Viceroy of conciliation, Lord Fitzwilliam; and the supporters of "English policy" determined to prevent the union of Irishmen for political objects, by the spread of religious rancour. It had existed previously as a secret society under the name of "The Peep o' Day Boys" (see Plowden's and John Mitchel's *History of Ireland*), which was one of those Protestant agrarian organizations referred to at page 34. The original oath taken by Orangemen was :—

—"In the awful presence of Almighty God, I, A. B., do solemnly swear that I will, to the utmost of my power, support the King and the present Government; and I do further swear that I will use my utmost exertions to exterminate all the Catholics of the kingdom of Ireland."

From the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam and the foundation of Orangeism, the Irish Parliament made no attempt to further repeal the Penal Laws against Catholics; and in 1800, as Protestant ascendancy was firmly established, the Orange lodges everywhere energetically protested against Pitt's proposal. The directors of "English policy," however, had cunningly used them to oppress and torture the Catholics; and with a divided nation, Pitt succeeded in corrupting a majority of the Protestant Parliament, the reform of which Orange bigotry had prevented, by perpetuating the exclusion of Catholics and Nonconformists. The brethren therefore found themselves powerless to hinder the Union, and were, in fact, caught in their own trap.

In 1820 the rules of Orangeism were revised, in pursuance of a resolution, which stated that practices had been adopted in the order "offensive even to common decency." The Duke of Cumberland later on was made Grand Master, and plotted, with the help of the organization, to secure his accession to the throne, first instead of his brother, William IV., and afterwards instead of her present Majesty. When the Princess Victoria was born, Daniel O'Connell, with a sigh of relief, cried out:—"Thank God, there is another life between us and the hoary tyrant of Hanover."

So active were the Orange plotters against the present Queen before her accession, that the King and Parliament interfered, and in September, 1835, a Committee

of the House of Commons asked that legal proceedings should be instituted without delay against the grand officers of all Orange lodges. On 23rd February, 1836, a resolution of Lord John Russell was unanimously agreed to by Parliament, praying the King to take effectual measures for the discouragement of Orange lodges, to which William IV. sent a reply cordially assenting. On 15th March, 1836, a Treasury minute was issued, forbidding any member of the Civil Service from belonging to an Orange lodge; and soon after these measures the Duke of Cumberland, baffled in his conspiracies with the brethren, dissolved the English lodges. The Irish Orangemen thereupon took steps to "legalize" the constitution of the society, and new rules were issued, after being submitted to Mr. Napier, Q.C. Vehement protestations of ardent loyalty caused their misconducts in time to be forgotten, but in Ulster the nuisance they locally create has always been regarded by the Government as a danger.

In 1857, during Lord Carlisle's viceroyalty, the Lord Chancellor (Maziere Brady) declared, in a letter to the Lieutenant of Down, published in the *Northern Whig*, 6th October, 1857, that no person should be allowed to hold the commission of the peace who was an Orangeman, and expressed doubts as to the legality of the society, which, he said, was mainly responsible for the dangerous breaches of the peace then constantly occurring. On 18th February, 1858, Lord Palmerston backed up Chancellor Brady, in replying to a protesting deputation, and asked, "Is it an organization which belongs to the age in which we live? Is it not rather one that is suited to the middle ages—to those periods of society when anarchy prevailed?"—and he recommended the dissolution of the order.

In 1864 Belfast was kept in a state of siege for weeks by Orange riots, many lives being lost; and from the foundation of the society till the present time few of its July anniversaries pass over without bloodshed.—(See a *History of Orangeism*, Dublin 1882.) In 1882 the Canadian courts declared the society illegal, and the Dominion Parliament rejected a Bill to legalize it. In 1884, Lord Spencer, when Irish viceroy, had to dismiss the Orange leader, Lord Rossmore, from the commission of the peace, for his riotous conduct in leading bodies of armed brethren to attack the Nationalists; and the language used by their chief spokesmen, in deliberately-written manifestoes, as well as in speeches, during the entire of the agitation for the extension of the franchise in 1883-4, was that of murderous ferocity.—(Healy's *Loyalty Plus Murder*, Dublin, 1884.)

In 1886 the cruel drowning of a Catholic lad in Belfast, and the wrecking and pillage of Catholic houses, which went on for days after the rejection of the Home Rule Bill, kept up the traditions of the order. All through the rest of Ireland the millions of Nationalists, to whom the defeat of Mr. Gladstone was a keen and unparalleled disappointment, gave no offence to any opponent. It was only the victorious minority that inaugurated a saturnalia of disorder and plunder.

It is a body with a history like this whose abettors and sympathizers call out for the suppression of the National League—a League which, embracing practically three-fourths of the people of Ireland, was created on the spur of self-defence, to defend a writ-ridden peasantry from the cruellest forms of oppression. Admittedly the Orangemen have no grievances; they boast of their loyalty, and therefore they must be comfortably off under the existing laws; yet it is where they are

predominant, and there alone, that we hear of murder, pillage, and wreckings, perpetrated against the minority who live amongst them. The peasant criminal, at any rate, can plead a terrible past and a miserable present in mitigation of his sins; but the Orangemen boast that they are contented, prosperous, educated, and loyal. Why, then, does not happy Belfast show the example to benighted Dublin and priest-ridden Cork, where the majority tolerate all sorts of opposition to their patriotic convictions?

But the palliators of Orange infamies plead, that whatever may be urged against the brethren, the brethren at any rate love England, adore the Queen, and are loyal to the backbone. Is this so? True, they are for ever flaunting their virtues, their fidelity, and their valour before the world; but is there nothing suspicious in a superfluity of protestation? "Methinks the lady doth protest too much." The mass of them shout their shibboleths of loyalty in the teeth of Nationalists, simply for partizan gratification, thinking it gives offence; and with this species of loyalists the object is equally the same, whether they cry, "God save the Queen," or "To h—— with the Pope." This spurious devotion to the throne is simply a survival of the epoch when the occupant of the throne was an ascendancy partizan, and would be turned to instant disaffection by a demonstration of impartiality on the part of her Majesty's Government.

The landlords are chiefly responsible as the promoters of the evil spirit which pervades two or three of the north-eastern counties. They provide Orange halls, and patronize the brethren, the better to rack-rent tenants of all religions. In the last century, Primate Boulter declared:—"When Papist and Protestant join, good-bye

to the English interest in Ireland;" and these gentlemen always assert that their interest *is* the English interest. But is there anything particularly lofty in being loyal to one's bread and butter? If certain persons have been kept well off at the expense of the bulk of the population, is it so very surprising that they should deprecate a change? And when so great an argument is made of the loyalty of less than half a million of Ulstermen, surely if their affections are so precious, those of some four millions of Irishmen in the other provinces, and three times as many abroad, are worth some effort to win.

The ultimatum of the Orange faction seems to be:—"Choose between the minority and the majority; for if you content the rest of the population, we, the loyal and true, will immediately fly to arms." Were it real patriotism, and not a narrow malignity which embued their leaders, should they not be prepared to make some concession for the common good? They are after all but a fraction of the people; and it seems the highest political egotism and selfishness in a minority to demand that the aspirations and desires of the rest of Ireland should be doomed to eternal disappointment, because of a sectarian distrust of the bulk of their fellow-countrymen.

But it is said by Radicals like Mr. Chamberlain that the Protestants must not be handed over "bound hand and foot to the yoke of a Dublin Parliament." Well, the Catholics were handed over for some centuries bound hand and foot to the yoke of a Dublin Parliament, wholly Protestant, and the grievance did not weigh very heavily on the conscience of the British Government. Every atrocity and infamy that the mind of fiends could devise was perpetrated against the

happiness, the liberty, and the property of the majority; yet the Catholics of Ireland declined to give up this Protestant Parliament, or assent to the Union in 1800, in spite of the promised bribe of immediate Emancipation. Daniel O'Connell, while yet this Protestant Parliament survived, thus spoke at a meeting of Catholics in Dublin in 1799, held to protest against the Union:—"It is my sentiment, and I am satisfied it is the sentiment not only of every gentleman who now hears me, but of the Catholic people of Ireland, that if our opposition to this inglorious, insulting, and hated measure of Union were to draw down upon us the revival of the Penal Laws, we would boldly meet a proscription and oppression which would be the testimony of our virtue, and sooner throw ourselves once more on the mercy of our Protestant brethren, than give our consent to the political murder of our country. Yes, I know—I do know—that, although exclusive advantages may be ambiguously held forth to the Irish Catholic to seduce him from the sacred duty which he owes his country—I know that the Catholics of Ireland still remember that they have a country, and that they will never accept of any advantages as a sect, which would debase and destroy them as a people."

After the passing of the Emancipation Act of 1829, O'Connell declared in the same spirit, that he would consent to the re-enactment of the Penal Laws against his co-religionists, provided he could get back the Protestant Parliament of Ireland. The breadth and loftiness of such declarations contrast strangely with the petty apprehensions of the persecutors. O'Connell's solicitude for the welfare and dignity of *all* Ireland, as compared with the pseudo-Radical cry for a *cordon sanitaire* round the Belfast district, to separate it from the

rest of the country, recalls the story of the women who pleaded before Solomon, and the answer the true mother gave to the judgment which would have severed her child in two.

But the Catholics forsooth would oppress the Protestants! Where is the evidence for this? Living at a time when every paltry outrage is magnified by telegraph for the English market, has there been any attempt made even by the purveyors of London sensation, to show that the half million Protestants outside Ulster have anywhere been constrained or assailed on account of their religion? Is there a board of guardians in the most Catholic districts that does not pay a Protestant chaplain a salary to minister to the spiritual wants of the handful of Protestant paupers in their workhouses—sometimes hardly numbering half a dozen, unmindful of the example given in places like Donegal where in spite of constant protests in Parliament, and official reproofs from the Local Government Board, not only will no priest be paid to take spiritual charge of the Catholics, who form the vast majority of the paupers, but the "loyalists" refuse to give three or four pounds a year to a Catholic catechist to teach the children the Christian doctrine. (See *Hansard*, *passim*, 1883 to 1886.) In Belfast or in Derry there is no Catholic in the Corporation, or employed by it, although the Catholics of Belfast number 60,000, and they are the majority of the population in Derry. Wherever religious oppression is practised in Ireland, there the Catholics are the minority, and the religious bogey will be buried the moment the landlords have no longer any interest in keeping the people divided.

But do not the loyalists of Ulster excel all Ireland in their thrift, prosperity, industry, and culture? They do

not. It is quite true that exceptional advantages were possessed for generations by Ulster in its special tenant-right, which prevented the robbery of the cultivator, who was rack-rented elsewhere; and the rise of Belfast may be traced to the privileges originally conferred on the borough of Carrickfergus, and sold by the corporation of that borough to Belfast. But granting prosperity to the Protestant districts, are they prosperous because they are loyal, or loyal because they are prosperous? Can any one who has read the history of the last three centuries wonder if the Catholics were neither wealthy nor contented? Let us examine, however, what substance there is in this boast of the superiority of Ulster, remembering, of course, that the first use "Ulster" made of the Franchise Act of 1884 was to return a majority of Nationalist representatives, to give the lie to the pretence that the North is opposed to Home Rule.

The following tables are taken from the Income-tax assessment return issued by the Home Office, and presented to Parliament in 1882 :—

	Income-tax per head of population.	Income-tax assessment in 1879-80.	Population in 1881.
Leinster, ...	£10 6 9	£13,272,202	1,282,881
Munster, ...	6 0 7	7,980,276	1,323,910
Ulster, ...	5 14 5	9,052.289	1,789,542
Connaught,...	3 13 7	2,995,438	813,506

The comparison between Belfast and Dublin is equally unfavourable :—

	Income-tax charged.	Income-tax assessment in 1879-80.	Population in 1881.
Dublin, ...	£102,609	£5,368,758	273,064
Belfast, ...	40,736	2,200,842	207,671

The contrast between what the Orangemen call "the progressive commercial capital of Ireland" and decaying Dublin, they explain by saying that Dublin's

income chiefly comes from the Imperial Civil Service establishments, which are supposed to enrich that city. Take, therefore, an Ulster and a Munster city of equal populations, where no such considerations can arise :—

	Income-tax charged.	Income-tax assessment 1879-'80.	Population in 1881.
Londonderry, -	£3,981	£223,775	28,947
Waterford, -	6,253	336,272	28,952

Schedule D of the Income Tax Assessments shows the payments made on profits in professions and trades. It should naturally demonstrate Ulster's manufacturing superiority; but here are the figures :—

	Schedule D assessment.	Assessment per inhabitant.
Leinster, - - - -	£5,291,461	£4 2 6
Ulster, - - - -	2,527,344	1 9 1
Munster, - - - -	1,811,343	1 7 4
Connaught, - - -	249,088	0 6 1

The tests of valuation and contribution to local rates, as shown by Return No. 164, presented to Parliament in 1884, are also remarkable :—

	Valuation of rateable property.	Valuation per inhabitant.
Leinster, - - - -	£4,711,193	£3 13 5
Munster, - - - -	3,365,182	2 10 10
Ulster, - - - -	4,348,713	2 9 11
Connaught, - - -	1,431,019	1 15 2

If in consequence of these figures it is contended that "Protestant" Ulster is prejudiced by being included with "Catholic" Ulster, the answer is that, tested county by county with the rest of Ireland, these returns prove, that either as to income-tax assessment or valuation ratings, the four most Protestant counties in Ulster are distanced by fourteen Catholic ones in the south.

The estimated value of live stock, and average size and valuation of the holdings in the four provinces,

afford another test of wealth (*Thom's Almanac*, 1886):—

	Value of cattle, sheep, and pigs.	Average size of holdings (acres).	Average valuation of holdings.
Munster,	£20,048,949	42	£25
Leinster,	16,938,867	36	31
Ulster,	15,667,364	29	17
Connaught,	10,857,097	23	11

The comparative poverty of the different provinces may be judged also by a return (C. 4059, 1884) of the rent extinguished under the Arrears Act, 1882:—

	No. of holdings affected.	Totals arrears wiped off.	Yearly rental of holdings affected.
Connaught,	52,883	£634,331	£308,456
Ulster,	41,134	561,391	357,398
Munster,	18,994	341,198	282,563
Leinster,	12,879	223,902	163,533

Thus it is apparent that the farmers of Ulster, who enjoyed the security of tenant-right, generations before it was extended to the rest of Ireland, were obliged to avail themselves of the protection of the Arrears' Act to nearly as great an extent as those of impoverished Connaught; whereas in the "League-ridden" provinces of Munster and Leinster, with their "dishonest" and "agitating" peasantry, not half as many farmers were behind in their payments to the landlords, or alleged that they were unable to pay their rent.

If prosperity is shown by higher emigration, then Ulster is prosperous, for there was absolutely and relatively a greater drain from the North than elsewhere during the last decade:—

	Decrease, 1871-81.	Decrease per cent.
Ulster,	93,686	5.38
Munster,	69,575	5.26
Leinster,	59,998	4.68
Connaught,	29,279	3.59

As to illiteracy, the Northern province shows no pre-eminence, although Protestant education has never been proscribed, whereas the Catholics have been shamefully treated in educational matters :—

	Percentage able to read and write.
Leinster, - - -	58.5
Ulster, - - -	53·4
Munster, - - -	53.2
Connaught, - - -	41.5

Injudicious champions sometimes claim a specially God-fearing quality for the North ; but, so far as the statistics of drunkenness and illegitimacy go, the figures are less unfavourable to the "priest-ridden" South and West. Ulster certainly can boast the greatest freedom from evictions, and consequent agrarian crime ; but its sturdy farmers would hardly be flattered by being told that they would bear the razing of their roof-trees with more meekness than other men; and it is but forty years since the agent of Lord Londonderry declared, that the oppressions common in the south would provoke outrages that would "make Down another Tipperary." (See p. 87.)

Passing from the Ulster argument, objectors contend that the Irish question could be settled by a minuter measure of Home Rule than that on which Mr. Gladstone was defeated. Yet these are the same logicians who at other times pretend that the rejected Bill is too small to satisfy the Irish people, and that it would be used as a lever for separation. If Mr. Gladstone's Bill would not satisfy the Irish people, what could a minor measure effect ? If Home Rule affords a lever for separation, would a smaller proposal not give a leverage to gain Home Rule, out of which it is asserted separation must spring ? Which plan, then, offers the greatest prospect of finality ?

Again, what are those lesser powers of local government which are allowable and safe? For generations we have been hearing that Parliament would be willing to entrust Ireland with control over gas, water, and railways. It costs tens of thousands annually to pass Irish private Bills at Westminster. In 1885, for instance, the Central Ireland Branch Railway, seven and a-half miles long, was opened, at a cost of £52,460. Of this, £4,322 was parliamentary costs, or 8 per cent. of the whole, the land for the line costing but little more, viz. :— £6,025. Millions have been wasted in this way since the Union. The Marquis of Hartington, in a speech at Sheffield, on 28th June, 1886, in support of a Unionist candidate, said that when he was Chief Secretary for Ireland (1872), "it had been his duty to prepare a small measure in the direction of Irish Home Rule—a measure intended to prevent the delays that were constantly occurring in matters of private bill legislation for Ireland; but he was not fortunate enough even to get the attention of his colleagues to that measure, which had since remained where, he was afraid, many other useful Irish measures had remained—in the pigeon holes of the Irish Department." This is a pretty confession, seeing that fourteen weary years have since elapsed. But why has no reform been tried? Because the moment any such thing was attempted, it would be "the letting out of water." The question of the tribunal to which such subjects should be relegated would instantly be raised; the Irish would object to any but a popular body having large powers conferred on it, and by no possibility could proper machinery be created, except under a sound representative system, which could alone invest it with authority and dignity.

So long, however, as an unsatisfied National feeling

remained in Ireland—a feeling which the rejected Home Rule Bill would appease—every smaller concession would be used against the central government, adding a thousand-fold to the difficulties of the executive. Disaffection would impregnably entrench itself behind pettifogging reforms, and the evil would not only affect the government at large, but would poison the local life of the country. To county councils on the proposed British model (*minus* a parliament) the magistracy and the police would have to be surrendered; but once the people controlled the Bench and Constabulary, their will would be law; and when disaffection had been formally enthroned in local power, what relics of privilege would be left which the ascendancy class would care to defend? Minute doses of local government would simply be a slow poison, which would bring about as certainly, but with a thousand-fold more agony, the death of the present system.

And what is that system? It is one which debars the body of the people from enjoying any control over their local affairs. The counties are governed and taxed by Protestant magistrates, chosen by a Protestant sheriff, under the name of a Grand Jury. The Poor-law is administered by boards, of which these magistrates must form half, with a restricted franchise for the elected moiety. The Harbour Boards and Town Boards are elected on an exclusive franchise, and exercise only limited powers; while the country at large is ruled from Dublin Castle by the Lord Lieutenant with arbitrary authority. On his Privy Council no man in the confidence of the people has a seat, though this body exercises a wide control even over matters wholly non-political, such as the shipping of live stock, a chief industry of Ireland. The Viceroy directs the troops

and the police. He appoints and dismisses officials of all grades. His nominees fill "Boards" without number. These Boards deride and defy popular feeling, and are practically irresponsible. There is a "Local Government Board" of three persons to control the poor-law guardians and sanitary authorities, a "Board of Public Works" of three persons to control the management of public works and public loans, a "Prisons Board" of four persons to control the prisons, and a "Board of National Education" to control Irish Education. Every public matter, almost, is in the Viceroy's hands—Judges, Drainage, Fisheries, Surveys, Petty Sessions Clerks, Lunatic Asylums, Dublin Hospitals, Endowed Schools, Charitable Donations, Public Records, Loan Funds, General Registry, Statistics, etc. What minor scheme could be proposed that did not give the ratepayers an effective control over these matters? And after it were established—upon the ruins of Home Rule—would the unappeased National sentiment be then less or more resistless?

To the idea that Irishmen are not to be trusted like other people—the "Hottentot" theory of Lord Salisbury may be opposed the declaration of Herbert Spencer:—"When antagonism has bred hatred towards another nation, and has consequently bred a desire to justify the hatred by ascribing hateful characters to members of that nation, it invariably happens that the political arrangements under which they live, the religion they profess, and the habits peculiar to them, become associated in thought with these hateful characters—become themselves hateful, and cannot therefore have their natures studied with the calmness required by science." —*Study of Sociology.*

Attacks on the character and conduct of the National

League (an organization which the Tory administration announced their intention of suppressing) are constantly made by partisan or uninformed persons in England. Those who patiently investigate the facts on the spot hold very different language. The special correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, who visited Ireland in February, 1886 (republished in *The Eve of Home Rule*, by Spenser Wilkinson), thus describes the management of the League :—"The local branches report their work in assisting tenants to combine or to make terms with landlords. They receive from the head office advice and pecuniary assistance. Their disputes are settled for them by the Central League, which also does its best to keep them within the legal and constitutional limits of its programme. This latter duty is one of the hardest the Central League has to perform, and I think great praise is due for the manner in which it is done. Who that has seen the bitter feelings, the often acute sufferings, of the peasant, against whom a harsh landlord has used his 'legal remedy' of eviction, is astonished when the peasant resorts to his 'natural remedy' of outrage? The National League has shown the peasant a better way, and has guided into peaceable channels a great portion of the pent-up feeling which without it would rush to the 'wild justice of revenge.' That a meeting of such peasants (from which of course the gentry, who might have been a guiding and a restraining influence, are absent) is now and then extreme or even wild in its resolutions, is natural enough. As far as I can judge, the National League is doing its best to keep such meetings within the bounds of reason and temperance."

Prejudice, privilege, ignorance, and the memory of an ancient feud, work against the cause of Ireland in the minds of Englishmen. Reason, policy, humanity,

and civilization are on its side. For seven hundred years the Irish have sought justice at the bar of England. It is surely time to grant their advocates a full hearing. The judge, the jury, and the accused in this international suit being the same, impartiality is difficult. Yet not without confidence, Ireland lodges before the high tribunal of the British people her great appeal. She pleads that for centuries she has been robbed and ruled by a selfish class, without profit or advantage to anyone but her puny persecutors, and freely admits that in this wretched business the great bulk of the English people have had neither part nor lot. Now, however, the hour of immediate and personal responsibility for the masses of England has arrived. They have had placed before them the methods by which Ireland has been ruled in the past. The crimes, the evils, the profitlessness of that system are everywhere acknowledged. If then no heed is give to the counsels of the wise and brave statesman, who has staked a noble career to promote the peace of both nations by proposing to allow the home affairs of Ireland to be managed by Irishmen, who will show England a better way?

THE END.

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